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"YAUNOCCA! YAUNOCCA!" HE CRIED.

(See page 297.)

WALLANNAH

A Colonial Romance

By WILL LOFTIN HARGRAVE

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WALLANNAH

CHAPTER I

The Spinning of the Web

IT was far back in the day when, save for a few thousand planted acres, the forests covered North Carolina from Currituck to Fear and from the peaks of the Unakas eastward to the slender breakwater, which, bent like a giant's knee, lies between Pamlico and the troubled seas.

Over all the land lay the hush of an autumn noon, a quiet deeper even than the stillness that comes before the dawn. In the part of that country where the Neuse creeps down to the great sweep that turns it eastward to the sound, the pines pointed through the breezeless air to a sky that, hard and hot, blazed like a glowing brazen dome. The wood-fringed river, broad as the sea of Bahret el Hijaneh, stood still at the poise of the tides, lapping its shores so faintly that its rippling could be heard only by the frog that blinked its yellow eyes among the reeds, or by the deer that stood flank deep in the cooling waters on the shoal, a rod off shore.

It seemed as though the length and breadth of the wooded land had never felt the weight of the foot of

man. Under the pines a bed of parching needles covered the earth and the creatures that crawled upon it; flowers, bright and vari-colored, and grass, knee high and fresh with moisture, lay in unbroken expanse over the sweep of the level land beneath the elms; and the lowlands at the river's brink were deep in ferns and rushes. But nowhere did a road divide the glades or a pathway wind about among the trees. Pines were there, tall and straight and great of girth, but the blazoned scar of the woodman's axe had never drawn their blood. All was wild, and unprofaned by the settler's ruthless hand, although but ten leagues further east lay New Bern, a restless, busy town girt about by the tilled and fertile lands of many planters.

But the forest, void though it seemed of human life, harbored in its sultry depths a savage world of its own people. Ever and anon a dusky face would peer through the vine-laced undergrowth, a bronzed arm would straighten to the bending of a bow, and a feathered arrow, gleaming white for a half-spent second, would flash across a sunny glade and sink a third of its length in the side of a fawn that thought itself at peace with the whole world.

Back a little way from the river and deeply bowered in the woodland, a tiny spring, bubbling from the ground, twisted down a grassy hillock toward a stream that wound its way into the Neuse. And there, as still as the trees about her, with head uplifted and her hair falling back from her face, stood an Indian girl. She leaned a little forward, as one who listens for a far-off sound. After a moment her lips, slightly parted, bent in a half-formed smile, as from the depths

of the wood came the mewing cry of a cat-bird. The muscles of her bare, rounded throat quivered the veriest trifle, and back went the answering call, clear and strong. Then, stepping quickly to the edge of the glade, she parted the bushes and looked down the slope toward the rivulet below. A long time she stood there, her graceful figure strongly marked against the green about her. Thrice did the wild-bird call awaken the forest echoes, and thrice went back the answer, sweet as the nightingale's song.

A fair picture she made, standing proudly in the glory of her youth. Her arms were bare to the bracelets that girt them above the elbows. Below her fringed skirt glistened the fantastic beadwork of her buckskin leggings; and her feet, small and shapely, were clothed in moccasins bearing on the instep the sign of a red-rayed sun. The lines of her figure were full and round, and her face, framed with a flowing wealth of coal-black hair, and lighted with great eyes of liquid brown, was as lovely a face as God had ever given to woman.

A pity it was that Sequa was a savage. True, her grandfather had been a king, but the blood of pagan kings carries no heritage of godliness. Her notions of lying and of theft, and of many things other than these, were far removed from the civilized standard. If Sequa made mistakes it was largely because she knew no better. At the same time, had her wishes led that way, she might have learned to know the good from the evil. So the facts can hardly excuse the girl from the several misdeeds which must be set against her account.

The heathen simplicity of Sequa's nature came plainly into view when she smiled with great, uplifted eyes into the face of the tall young man, who, threading his way among the trees, bounded across the rivulet and climbed to the mound beside her. And something of the same freedom came into play when he dropped his hand to her rounded waist, and she raised her arms, and drawing down his head, kissed him until he turned his face aside and cried for a chance to breathe. Then, each holding the other's hand, they walked across the glade to a spot which the sun's heat had not yet touched. There she sat, leaning her shoulders against the trunk of a towering elm; while he, resting lazily beside her, played with the rings on her fingers and talked to her in English and in Cherokee.

Had Sequa's eyes been trained to read in the face of man the lines of good and evil which were there, she might have looked with less favor upon the features of John Cantwell. True, his face was comely in a way. His forehead was broad and high, his eyes large and dark, and his skin so clear that the blue of his veins showed strongly on his brow and his temples. And, too, his mouth was of goodly shape, and his chin was firm and squarely moulded. All these things could Sequa see; and she found them pleasing. But the deep eyes had something in them which told the great, black lie of his life; and at times a look bespeaking a serpent's guile crossed his face and left a shadow not good for a knowing eye to look upon. But these were the things that Sequa could not see; so all that he seemed—to her—was pleasing.

They stayed in their forest bower a long time, until

"Remember all that I have told you."

the sun had gone far down to the west, and the woods had cooled and were musical with the songs of birds and the chatter of the squirrels in the tree-tops. And through all that time they plotted and planned, Sequa and her pale-faced lover; she laughing and making a huge jest of the matter in hand, he half serious and half mocking, but, through it all, masterful and unrelenting.

He had told her of a house that stood in the forest beyond the hamlet of Neusioc, a day's journey toward the river's head, and of a child within that house which must be stolen and brought to him by noon of the third day after. And Sequa, not knowing that Mary Ross, the mother, was Cantwell's truly wedded wife, laughed scornfully at the folly of the woman who had borne the child, and entered into the project with all the zest of her heathen spirit.

"And now," said Cantwell, when the plot was laid, "remember all that I have told you; and be careful with the child, and bring him to me alive and well."

"But if she—the foolish woman"—said Sequa, in her native tongue; "if she sees me, what shall I do then?"

"She cannot see you. Wait until she leaves the child alone in the room; then creep in and take him from his bed and run down the path by the river. When she comes back—"

With a low laugh, she interrupted him.

"If I could only see her then," she cried, exultantly. "She will laugh and cry, and make queer sounds, like the Sinnegar squaw with Tetah's arrow in her throat.

All this will she do because her skin is white and her heart is faint, and because she knows as little as her child of the wisdom that is Sequa's."

They looked at one another and laughed, the one merrily as from a light heart, the other with the ring that tells of venom in the soul. Then, rising to her feet she stretched out her bronzed arms with an indolent gesture of command. "Come, Great Heart," she said, with the deep love-light in her eyes, "soon the sun will leave us in the wood, and Sequa has yet a long journey to make. Ah!" she laughed, as breaking from his embrace she darted through the bushes and led the way down to the creek; "I feared you had forgotten! But you are so strong—you would crush me like a bear. Did she—the foolish one—love you as I do? No; she could not, for her face and her heart are white, and her blood runs slow like the water in yonder river. She loved you so little that she must bear the child and love him more than you. But Sequa is wise, and gives all her love to you. And who is happier, the foolish one, or Sequa?"

They went down the hill, he with an arm about her waist—a lithe, firm waist, muscled with steel, yet soft and yielding as a child's—and she brushing aside the branches and vines that bent across their way. Lifting her high above the water, he carried her across the stream; then dropping her, amid a shower of kisses, into the field of waist-high ferns, he led the way up the further bank, and together they went through the wood.

And the brook sang and danced foam-flecked over its pebbles; the cardinal-bird flamed gaily across the

sunlit open; and here and there the river, resplendent as a stream of gold, gleamed through the green of its banks of willow. Sequa, radiant in her pagan beauty, laughed and sang as she leaped from mound to fallen log, and from log to beds of fragrant flowers. And in that shining, favored land, all was fair and bright save only the eyes of John Cantwell, gleaming ominously with sinister craft—the one discordant note in the symphony of beauty.

It was twilight when Cantwell, returning to the village of New Bern, walked slowly down the street, greeting with kindly smile and cheering word the scores of friends whom he passed on the way. Pausing a moment at the great carriage-block before his house, he looked long and earnestly down the broad expanse of the Neuse as it stretched toward the sound; then, with more serious mien, he opened the gate, and walked up the graveled walkway to the white-pillared house that reared its noble front from a terrace of green and a maze of tulip-beds and blooming rosebushes. Before the oaken door he paused again; and once more his eyes sought the deepening haze of the seaward sweep of the river. But the *Leopard,* freighted with the wealth of the West Indies, and flying Cantwell's yellow pennant, was still beyond his sight—and twelve days overdue.

Opening the door, Cantwell mounted the stairway and entered his room—a luxurious apartment. The windows were richly curtained, and a canopy of soft brocaded silk hung over the great bedstead. Upon the walls were rare pictures, and on a pedestal in a windowed alcove stood a bronze statue of Hermes.

The classic mantel was set with carved vases of marble, and back of these was a silver-framed mirror, reputed to have come from a pirate brig captured off Cayo Verde and the Ragged Islands. The floor was bare, and shone with purest wax, and on its glistening expanse lay rugs of fur, and of silk from the looms of Azerbijan, each worth the ransom of a Bolobo slave. The massive mahogany furniture, with its rich upholstering, was the envy of the townspeople—and this, be it remembered, was but one room of all the great house.

Surrounded by these marks of wealth and of power, Cantwell dropped into his great rocking-chair, while his negro valet, having lighted the candles in the sconces, brought out a velvet suit of garnet, lined with pea-green satin and touched here and there with silver embroidery. After this, Cantwell, whose dark eyes had followed his servant hither and thither about the room, called for wine and asked that he be left alone. Then, although it was close to the hour of supper, he lay back in his chair and gave himself over to deep thought.

Scarce thirty years had passed since John Cantwell's eyes had first opened at Lancaster, in England, and of those thirty years fourteen had been spent in North Carolina. Landing at New Bern in the spring of 1740, a long-limbed, keen-eyed boy of sixteen, he had made friends from his first day ashore; and as he made friends he made also money. At the end of his second year in America he had built up a considerable traffic with the Indians. Exchanging clothing and tawdry ornaments for rich furs and crude native implements

of war and of peace, he marketed his curious wares among the British mariners who came to port, deriving therefrom the just and equitable profit of eight hundred per cent. Then, by an astuteness that set agape the mouths of the good people of New Bern, Cantwell made thousands of guineas by his sales of stores and munitions of war, first to Oglethorpe, who fought the Spanish invasion, and later to the Canadians and their allies, at the siege of Lewisburg, in 1745.

It mattered little that some envious ones whispered that Cantwell's powder sold for louis d' or and doubloons as well as for honest British sovereigns. The only thing of consequence was that Cantwell made the money; and by long strides he mounted to prosperity and ease. In his twenty-fifth year he bought the captured buccaneer *El Escoria,* changed her name to the *Leopard,* and placed her in the West Indian service, trading triangularly between New Bern, Havana and Liverpool.

It was after this that Cantwell, blessed with easy circumstances, abandoned his adventurous trading with the Indians and his long journeys with powder-trains and store-wagons, and settled down to an ever-widening sphere of influence in the home of his adoption. His friendships extended to the statesmen of the province and the favorites of the king. But this was done modestly, and with no show of undue exultation. Then, to keep his blood in tone and his muscles firm, he put to practical use the knowledge of surveying, which, through long study by lamplight and by firelight, he had gained in the years past. And throughout the province many disputed boundaries were set aright by

his skill. He was made justice of the peace in the town of New Bern, and still retained the office, although beyond real need of its fees: for John Cantwell, with some fifteen or twenty thousand pounds to the good, would still let nothing pass which would add a shilling to his store.

During the governorship of Gabriel Johnston, the influence of Cantwell became more marked than ever. He might at any time have held a seat in the council, yet firmly set aside the pleading of his friends, and kept aloof from the halls of legislation.

It was at this time that Cantwell accepted a limited commission from Governor Johnston. Acting under this, he began a journey along the shores of the Neuse, seeking a spot where a great English mill might locate and find water wherewith to turn its wheels. Out of all the province Cantwell was chosen for this mission, because he knew the river from Pamlico to the headwaters, and from shore to shore, and from its high-tide mark to the silt that drifted along its bottom. Then, too, all the tongues of the Indian tribes were to Cantwell as the king's own speech; and the governor wished to learn some other things that none but the Cherokees knew. Thus, Cantwell's quest was of importance; and when it degenerated into something not foreseen in the plan, the governor was not the one to blame.

All might have gone well, and Cantwell, possibly, would have lived a life of unbroken prosperity and ease, had it not been that the pestilence that walketh in darkness went far from its course and seized upon Cantwell in the noonday. Stricken with the marsh

fever that spread through tidewater Carolina in that year, he rode, ill and half crazed, through a rain-storm of many hours' duration. At last, when the dusk had shut down over all the land, Cantwell halted at the lonely cabin of the Widow Ross, which stood then, and for twenty years thereafter, at the end of the mile-long path that ran crookedly westward from Neusioc.

She who opened the door to Cantwell's knock was Mary, the widow's daughter, a fair-haired girl of his own age, with eyes of violet and with red lips and peach-blow cheeks. Ill though the man was, a flash of eager interest crossed his face, and he addressed the girl in such soft-spoken phrases that the blood surged beneath the fair skin of her cheek and she lowered her gaze to the floor. A quick gleam came to his eyes. Then, looking across the room, with unhesitating frankness he met the widow's kind regard and named himself John Matthews, a traveler lost in the forest and ill unto desperation. Why he did it, whether the river-fever had mounted to his brain and had left him unreasoning, or whether something came to him of the things that might lie in the future, none but Cantwell could tell. At any rate, Matthews had he called himself, and as Matthews they took him into their home, giving him such welcome as their humble means afforded.

Seeing how ill the man was, they placed him in the best room in the cabin, which room happened to be Mary's, spotlessly swept and garnished. Then the girl, with tumult in her heart, sat half the night by the kitchen fire and wove romances, rose-hued and fantastic, with the dark-eyed youth as their hero.

They nursed Cantwell for nine long weeks. Before he left them he had learned all of their pitiful story of hardship and disappointment. He knew how Henry Ross, who for ten long years had fought the Indian and the wolf in that wilderness, met his death one day at even by the falling of a rotted pine beside his very cabin door; how the widow and the daughter and the twelve-year-old boy had struggled against the enemies that lurked in the forest and the destruction that came hand in hand with the wars of the elements.

Then, over and above all, was the pitiful hope against hope for the day when all these things would pass from them, and they might come back again to the settlements of peace and plenty. So he learned much of them; but they knew little of him, save that he found favor in their eyes; that he spoke with more than passing kindness to the girl; and that he had wealth and power beyond that of any man they had ever known.

Then came the workings of that inscrutable power which the brothers of Islam call *kismet*—that which to some is "fate," and to others "Providence."

Cantwell's visits to the cabin became frequent; and, as seemed befitting, he paid court to the widow's daughter; and through it all, there being none to gainsay him, he remained John Matthews.

At last, when springtime was close at hand, when the wood was fair with the sweet bay and the magnolia, and the yellow jessamine and the wild tulip bloomed in the forest groves — on one of these days, in the grass-girt path that wound along the river shore, Cantwell asked Mary to be his wife. And she, looking

into his face with awe, and trembling, said, "If mother place no bar in my way, I will wed you when you will."

And that had been four years ago! The smile that came with the thought died on Cantwell's lips in a sneer. As Sequa had said, the woman was a fool!

Rising to his feet, with something very like an oath he consigned his memories to perdition and began dressing for the evening meal: for Mistress Cantwell, high-bred and high-strung, awaited him in the dining-room, and her temper when awry was not pleasant for a man to face. But Mistress Cantwell was not she who had once been Mary Ross.

Now, it goes without saying that the story of a man's life, as that life is known to the man himself, can be told by no one else. And, equally, it goes without saying that the man never tells it. From the first of men (and thousands of millions have since lived and died) down to the youngest among us now, certain things in every life have gone and will go as secrets to the tomb. Perhaps it is best that this is so; for, were all things known, some several thousand saints would have failed to rise above the ranks of men.

As for John Cantwell, the world for many years thought him one man when in his life he was another. In the later days, when the rest of mankind began to know him as he was, some of the wise men of that time said that Cantwell had two souls, one of good, the other of evil. Certainly he lived two lives; but if one were bad, and that were the true one, then was the other bad, or worse: for it was a lie. The hypocrite who bows his head in holy places has less grace than

the other sinner who flaunts his wickedness from the house-tops.

Yet, with Cantwell there were times — as one among his friends could say — when the man rose for a brief spell above the charnel-house of his dual self, and suffered in that moment such tortures as are measured to the unredeemed. Be that as it may, few knew until his last day that John Cantwell was other than the upright man of trade, the just magistrate, and the friend of the humble people. None was more eloquent in prayer, none more brotherly in sickness or in death, and none more willing to help whomsoever needed a friend. He who stopped a man in the streets of New Bern, and asked, "What know you of John Cantwell?" would straightway have his answer: "'Squire Cantwell is a good man—yea, and a true one." Such was he in the eyes of the people. In the eyes of God — but that is not for man to say.

Well might these things have come to Cantwell's mind that night as he sat at his table. Facing him was Mistress Cantwell, stately and proud of soul; and at his left and at his right were the little son and daughter who had come of their union. Yet, in the forest, ten leagues to the west, was Mary Ross, wedded to him by the lawful ritual; and somewhere between the one wife and the other was Sequa, who looked upon him even as did the two others. But, with it all, Cantwell's face betrayed no sign save of peace and satisfaction of soul. That was the way of the man.

CHAPTER II

The Theft of the First-Born

FTER her talk with Cantwell, two nights and a day and a fourth part of the second day passed before Sequa, emerging from the forest, entered the village of Neusioc. A full thirty miles had she come; and the journey had been a rough one. The road that joined Neusioc and New Bern could scarce be called a road. Cypress and scrub oak lined the way; and marshes and bayous so crossed the course that much of the highway lay a sodden mire for half the day and a flooded swamp in the hours when the tide was in. Through this country, with the wolf and the bear in wood and in canebrake, Sequa had made her solitary way. What wonder that at Neusioc she sought her father's hut and slept there until the close of the afternoon.

Neusioc, as has been said, stood at the eastern end of the path which led to the home of Mary Ross. How old the place was no one knew. When the first pale-face came up the Neuse, he found it an ancient Indian town—so ancient that its chief, himself blind and feeble with age, could but say that Neusioc was old and decaying when his father's grandfather led the war dance of the tribe that gave the town its name.

But Neusioc, in this twenty-seventh year of the

reign of the second George, was not as it had been in the days of its heathen king. Of the mouldering wigwam walls not one stick nor stone stood beside or upon another. Huts of log and sapling lined the town's single, crooked avenue; and here and there a gleam of red marked the rise of a white man's chimney. Fences, heavy with gourd vines, kept the cattle from the gardened yards; and from every homestead came the medley of the poultry and the swine. Indians were there, some clear-eyed and proud with the pride of race, but others, and the greater part, dull-faced and drink-besotted—broken reeds at the end of a line of kings.

Within the little settlement peace and harmony prevailed, white men and red working together as of one kind, each helping to ease the other's burden. And of the men who peopled the town, two stood head and shoulders above their fellows. They were James Noel, the village minister, and Tetah, the father of Sequa. Mr. Noel had a wife, frail and fair as a drooping flower, and a laughing, blue-eyed child; while Tetah, whose squaw slept beneath the sod of the Piedmont forests, had but the girl; yet she was one whose beauty made her greater in the province even than was he himself.

The Reverend James Noel had come from England to the Carolinas nearly a year before, and from his own purse had built the rude log church that stood on the little village green. Tetah had trodden the forests before Christopher Baron de Graafenreidt brought his Swiss and his Germans from the Alps and from the Rhine, when the century was but nine years old; and

Tetah had no church, for his god was the great Manitou, whose temple was the earth beneath and the sky above and all that lay between the two. The minister was the second son of a great peer, and his brother, ill in health and broken in spirit, was Henry, Lord Durham. With any day might come the death of Durham, and the stately mansion would open its doors to receive as its master the Carolina missionary. Tetah was the only son of a chief whose feathered crown had nodded at the downfall of legioned enemies. Back among the mountains lived a warrior tribe, whose squaws kept ever ready the lodge of him whose fathers were kings among their people back unto the days when the great sea lapped against the peak of Yuannocca; and that was very long ago, for now the mountain of the Manitou stands sheer three thousand feet above the plains that lie below.

Such were the two men, and, although God had made them of different races they were alike in so far as each of them was fearless, steadfast, and of unswerving truth.

From the time that Mr. Noel had come to Neusioc, Sequa had made it her way to stop at his house and ask his blessing whenever she passed through the village. Her father, who thought the white man's religion a good thing for some men and all women, had taught her this; and for a twelvemonth she had been unfailing in her duty. So it was with some wonder that the minister learned at evening that Sequa, after sleeping all day at her father's house, without further ado had gone back to the forest, passing the parsonage without a look to the right or to the left. The worthy

man thought a long while over the strangeness of Sequa's behavior, and at last came to think that something outside of love and lovers troubled the girl's mind.

Mr. Noel and his wife were at supper, and their little daughter, Alice, was sleeping in her crib, when the news came to them of the things which concerned Sequa. While they sat there, the knocker made a loud clangor on the front door. They heard the servant's step, the opening of the door, a rush of skirts, and a woman's quick sobbing in the hallway. A moment later, and Mary Ross, white-cheeked and wild-eyed, entered the dining-room. She gave them no time for greeting, but burst into a storm of grief.

"My child! my child!" she cried, as she staggered forward to the light. "Mr. Noel, where can he— Oh! help me."

She stood for a moment, her hands pressed tightly on her breast and her eyes fixed with pitiful appeal upon the minister's face. And a fair picture she made, for the woman was comely, and her face was such as painters use for a Mater Dolorosa.

The minister and his wife had both risen to their feet when Mary entered the room; and he, fearing she would faint and fall, pushed aside his chair and crossed quickly to her side.

"Your child?" he said, sharply. "What is the matter?"

She suffered herself to be led to the sofa by the window. "Stolen," she gasped; "stolen."

Mrs. Noel gave a nervous little cry.

"Stolen?" repeated Noel. "By whom?"

"By an Indian girl — an hour ago. John was — "

"Never mind John now. Who was the girl?"

"Sequa," she answered him.

Then he knew what had kept Sequa from the parsonage. He began pacing backward and forward.

"Now tell us how it happened. Begin at the first, and tell even the slightest circumstance," he said, with the ring of kindness again in his voice.

She did as she was told. The story was a simple one. Mary's recital made it graphic, and her facts were unencumbered with supposition.

She had gone to the kitchen to prepare the evening meal for herself and her brother John. The babe she had left sitting on the floor encircled by his toys. Suddenly it came to her that the little fellow was quieter than was his wont. Stepping to the doorway she looked into her room. The child was gone. She ran to the outer door. John was hoeing in the field by the river. She tried to call. Her voice failed her. Then, from the edge of the forest she heard something like a laugh. Turning quickly she saw the graceful figure of an Indian girl sweeping down the path to the wood. She tried to follow her, but a deathly faintness came over her. A little sapling stood by the door-step, and she reached out for it to help her until the giddiness passed away. At the bending of the path the Indian girl looked back. The face was the face of Sequa. She was laughing, and held a bundle in her arms. Then the earth and woods and Sequa's bronzed face seemed to whirl about before her eyes. Myriad stars flashed before her, the ground under her feet rose up like a great black sea, and she felt herself falling,

falling, until her brother's voice awoke her. Then she was in her room and on her bed, with John binding her head in wet tŏwels.

When she had finished her story, the minister, standing by the table, regarded her thoughtfully.

"Have you ever done anything to offend Sequa?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

She shook her head. "Never," she answered.

"Or any of her friends, or people?"

"No."

"Did John Matthews, your husband, ever speak of her?"

Mary affirmed that Matthews had never known the woman.

"Then," he said, "you know of no reason for this act of hers?"

"Not the slightest." The look of appeal was still in her eyes, and her lips trembled visibly.

Noel looked across at his wife.

"Alice," he said, in his firm, quiet voice; "ask Henry to bring Tetah here." Scarcely had the words left his lips when Henry stood in the doorway.

"Mars' Noel," the negro said, "the Injun Teeter says as he wants to see you."

"Send him here."

Then, with the shuffle of moccasined feet and the rattle of many beads, the chieftain entered the room. Giving a quick glance into the faces of the two women, he crossed to where the minister stood to meet him. With a gesture of greeting, the Indian spoke.

"You see Sequa?" he asked, in low, musical tones.

"No; she did not come," responded Noel. Then,

closely watching the chieftain's face, "Do you know why?"

The strong, deep lines of Tetah's face showed no change from the look of truth which was stamped there.

"Sequa find trouble," was his laconic answer.

Noel kept his eyes on the scarred features before him. "Trouble?" he asked. "What kind of trouble?"

"Tetah not know."

"Has she been to your house?"

"Yes. Sleep all day."

"Was she alone?"

The Indian nodded affirmatively.

"When did she go away?"

"When sun go."

"And which way?"

"Up river."

"Have you seen her since?"

"No."

"Then why do you think she has met with trouble?"

"Sequa no eat good — no come see white chief — Peoperquinaiqua. Sequa trouble."

Despite the seriousness of the matter in hand, Noel smiled at the force of the Indian's reasoning.

"Why have you come here?" he asked.

"Peoperquinaiqua good man — good heart, good head. Tell what trouble Sequa?"

Noel shook his head. "No," he said, slowly. Then, after a moment's silence, "Go and find Sequa. I'll wait for you until midnight."

Without more ado Tetah turned on his heel and left the room.

The minister took his seat by his wife. Mrs. Noel was the first to speak. "Why didn't you tell him that Sequa had stolen Mary's child?" she asked, with womanly resentment. Noel smiled.

"Tetah is an Indian: Sequa is his daughter," he answered. "Had I told him all that we know, he would justify her course and we would lose an ally."

"But if he finds her with the child?"

"He will bring her here, child and all."

"And if he doesn't find her?"

"Some one else will."

"But who?"

He turned his head slowly, looking first at his wife, then at Mary.

"That is a question," he said, at last.

Mrs. Noel gave an impatient tap of her foot.

"James Noel, you are so provoking. Of course it's a question. Who will find her?"

Had Mary not been there, Noel's answer would have been, "Perhaps no one." As it was, he looked earnestly into the white face which turned with its mute appeal to meet his answer.

"No mortal can tell you that," he answered, kindly. "I will try; and Mary's brother can do much. Beyond that — " He paused a moment.

"Beyond that?" reminded Mrs. Noel.

He looked thoughtfully toward her.

"Beyond that," he said, slowly — and the wheels of Fate were whirling fast as he spoke — "beyond that, I know of but two who can give us aid. One is Tetah, the other John Cantwell, of New Bern."

"Cantwell?" repeated his wife, musingly. "Oh!

yes; 'Squire Cantwell; and he knows all about Indians, doesn't he?"

"Not all: no one can claim that. But he knows more than any man in the province, except, perhaps, the hunters who live among them."

Mrs. Noel had crossed the room, and, sitting beside Mary, had slipped her hand into that of the broken-hearted woman.

"You will ask 'Squire Cantwell to help us?" she asked.

"I will write to him now. If Tetah comes back alone, Henry will start with the letter to the 'Squire." Then, turning to Mary, "May God be good to you!" he said, a little huskily. "I feel your grief more than I can tell."

Then he left them together, which was wise in him; for a man can give little comfort to a woman in bereavement, save when the tie of love is between them. But two women — that is a different matter; and Mrs. Noel, with the tact and resource of the highly-bred, brought comfort to Mary's heart, and hope into her night of trouble.

The hours passed with sullen, grudging slowness. In the study the letter to Cantwell was written and sealed for its sending. In the other room the minister's wife, in low tones and with tender words, was bringing some little cheer into Mary Ross's life. At last the time came. On the stroke of twelve the study door opened, and Noel entered the dining-room from one side as Henry and Tetah came in at the other.

The Indian stood like a bronze statue under the light of the hanging lamp. In breathless silence they

waited for him to speak; but he said nothing. Raising his eyes to the minister's face, he held out his open hands, palms upward and empty. The eloquence of the simple gesture was unmistakeable. He meant that he had sought Sequa and had failed to find her.

Mary, sobbing bitterly, sank back into her seat.

Tetah gave her one quick glance, then with stolid demeanor turned from them and left the house.

Thus it was that an hour later Henry, astride his master's horse, took the New Bern road, bearing Noel's plea to Cantwell. And Mary again took heart and looked to the morrow with a new hope, for she knew no Cantwell. Truly, the 'Squire had woven a devil's net, and the powers of darkness seemed to have labored with him.

CHAPTER III

A Meeting and a Parting

THE home of the Noels was among the better looking houses in the village. It was strongly built, and within its walls were several rooms and a long passage-way from front to back. It stood upon a terraced knoll, and between it and the winding, unpaved street lay a grass plot, broad and smooth and of a cheering green. The house, though well constructed, was not a cool one, and for this reason Mr. Noel had erected on the lawn an arbor, now covered with vines; and he and his wife often sat there, for it was cool and shady and gave an unobstructed view of the river as it crept past the village and rounded the bend toward the sound.

The day after that on which Mary had lost her child was sultry and oppressive. It was late in the afternoon. Mary had returned to her woodland home, there to await news from 'Squire Cantwell, and the minister and his wife were spending an hour in the arbor while the baby Alice slept within the house. They had been talking of England, and of their life in the days before they came to America. After a brief silence, during which the minister, his mind far away from Carolina, stared with grave, unseeing eyes down the sweep of the Neuse, and his wife bent her fair young face over a

lapful of embroidery—Noel returned to their former theme.

"From all the talking that I do," he said, turning away from the river and looking down at her, "one might think that I wanted to go back again; but I cannot say that I do. True, England is dear to me, but America is dearer, so long as you are here with me."

She raised her head, and answered him with a smile of appreciation.

"We have sacrificed more than we would if we had stayed in the old home parish," he continued, when she had returned to her needlework; "but I feel that the reward has been perfectly adequate. Still, with all our contentment, I am inclined to worry over one or two matters."

She looked up again, and laughed with the same low, musical laugh that had won his heart years before. "Worry?" she said. "Why, James, you couldn't if you tried — really you couldn't."

He shook his head. "You over-estimate my optimism, Elsie," he said, with a smile; "but, seriously, my brother Henry has been ill for many months, and I fear that any ship may bring me news of his death."

"Y-es," was the doubtful response, "it may come; but men who are ill so long seldom die suddenly. You would have heard long since if Henry's illness had become serious."

"Perhaps you are right."

Then they relapsed into a silence, broken only by the faint sound of the thread drawn through the linen on Mrs. Noel's embroidery frame.

The minister sat leaning slightly forward, his chin

upon his hand and his eyes following the flight of a gull which soared above the river. Then his gaze dropped a little, and was fixed on a tiny speck in the middle of the broad sweep of the river. As the spot grew larger the minister's preoccupied look gave place to one of eager interest; and when the dot on the water's surface became an eight-oared gig with a gleam of the royal blue at its helm, he began to hum an old sea song, learned on the wharves of Hull in the days of his boyhood. His wife looked up at him.

"Why, James," she said, in wonder at his change of mood, "how can one tell when you are serious and when gay? What have you done with your cares?"

He nodded toward the boat in the river. "Of his Majesty's navy," he said, with gladness in his voice. "Perhaps some one we have seen before — at any rate, a real human being who can tell us of the world outside."

They watched the boat draw nearer. It seemed a long time before the oarsmen reached the Neusioc shore; but when that time did come, the boat, with a quick half-turn, swung with gunwale to the landing, and a light, active form sprang upon the bank.

The minister and his wife, from their distant point of vantage, could see only the quick, imperative gestures which emphasized the officer's commands. Then he turned away from his men and was lost in the bushes that overhung the path to the parsonage.

Five minutes later the officer, emerging from the thicket that bordered the field opposite the Noel house, walked quickly across the intervening space. He reached the front gate, where Mr. Noel waited to give

him welcome. Taking him by the hand, the minister led him to the arbor.

"Elsie," he said, with a boyish ring of gladness in his voice, "here is Lieutenant Maynard. But where is our fatted calf?"

Mrs. Noel arose and held out her hand. "We're very, very glad to see you again, Lieutenant; but don't let Mr. Noel's allusion to the fatted calf lead you to believe that you are altogether a prodigal in our eyes."

Maynard, bowing graciously, smiled at her laughing welcome.

"Even though I had wasted my substance in riotous living," he said, "and would fain have eaten of the food of the swine, you know, Mrs. Noel, that I could not have been happier in meeting you and this reverend husband of yours than I am now. But, first, my dear Noel, let me give you a despatch from England. It should have been sent by a less busy boat. The *Wasp* has been forced to wing her way in great zigzags, here, there and everywhere, since that letter was handed me. Read it now, while I deliver a cargo of woman's messages to Mrs. Noel. My wife saw me for only an hour in New Bern this morning, but she told me enough news—for Mrs. Noel's ears, of course—to keep a man's tongue busy for a whole day."

The minister stepped to one side to read the letter, while the lieutenant, taking his place beside Mrs. Noel, continued his conversation.

Maynard was a splendid type of the British naval officer of that day. Though tall and somewhat spare in build, his tightly-fitting uniform displayed a muscular

development suggesting the sinewy agility of a panther. His eyes flashed whenever he spoke, sometimes with a gleam of merriment, again with a blaze that more than one man had learned to fear. There were other times when the fire in those hazel depths was subdued into a tenderness that made women wonder whether or not the stories of this man's terrible deeds of war could be true. And such was the light that shone upon Mrs. Noel as Maynard told her, with a thrill of pride in his voice, of his wife and the baby Arthur, in the governor's town of New Bern, thirty miles down the river.

"Margaret thinks," he was saying, "that the boy is the greatest prodigy of the eighteenth century; and I don't know but what he is. If he does all that his mother claims, he'll be a statesman before he outgrows his dresses. But where is his little *fiancee,* Alice? I thought to see her running about here cracking her dolls' heads against the trees, and —"

"Why, Will Maynard, she's only eight months old!"

"Eight months? Well, Arthur has hardly a year and a half advantage of her, and he can run and jump and ride horseback, and—"

"What terrible men you sailors are! Ananias must have held a commission in the king's navy."

Maynard laughed. "No, Mrs. Noel. Not only could Ananias prove an alibi, but remember that the record says that he gave up the ghost. An officer in his Majesty's service never gives up anything."

"Hush!" whispered Mrs. Noel, with a gleam of laughter in her eyes. "Don't let James hear anything like that. He'd preach about it next Sunday."

"On my honor, I'll keep clear of such entanglements. But where is the baby Alice? May I see her before I go? I'm here only for the hour, and must sail for England to-morrow."

"So soon? Can't you stay the week out?"

Maynard shook his head.

"You are going to England?" Mr. Noel asked, suddenly, folding his letter and approaching them.

"My orders so read."

"Very soon?"

"To-morrow."

Mrs. Noel looked curiously at her husband. His face was a trifle pale. "What is it, James?" she asked anxiously. "Bad news?"

The minister smiled and rested his hand upon her shoulder. "Nothing so very serious, Elsie; but go now, and see why Alice is crying. The Lieutenant and I must talk over some business."

The two men watched her as she crossed the lawn and entered the house. Then the minister turned quickly to his companion.

"I, too, am called to England."

Maynard gave a low exclamation. "You are?" he said, gravely. "I'm sorry. Can't you —"

"No, I must go. My brother Henry, Lord Durham, is so ill that he may die before I can reach Lincolnshire. In any event, I must be there as soon as possible. Can you take me on the *Wasp?*"

"Certainly, if you can get ready in time — say in an hour. Family going with you?"

"No; impossible. But if I do not return within two or three months, they must follow. In the

meantime, they will be safe enough here, although it will be terribly lonely."

"It will, indeed. But you can arrange for Mrs. Noel to stay with Mrs. Maynard during your absence. It would be a godsend to my wife, for she, poor woman, is doomed to more than her share of that sort of privation."

"Thank you, Maynard. You have anticipated my wish. She will need some little time to make her own plans; but I accept your invitation with what may be unseemly haste. Elsie, I know, will be delighted with the arrangement. Here she comes now."

The whole world knows that women are not alike in their way of hearing bad news. Some meet the shock with a gasp that ends in a flood of tears and complete collapse of all that goes to the making of the nervous system. Others turn a little white, smile through the faintest possible mist of tears, then with Spartan courage face the trouble stout-heartedly and with unbending resolve. Of the latter kind was Mrs. Noel.

But an hour before feeling secure, even in that wilderness, with her husband to stand between her and the rough world about them, she was now brought to face months of separation, with danger lurking on every side: for the Indians had not yet learned the respect due a white man's home and kind, and what was now a peaceful, thriving hamlet might at any hour flow with blood and echo with the war-whoop and gun-shot of a horde of savage enemies.

Yet, when Noel told her that Maynard's ship was come to bear him away to England, she made no

murmur of complaint, but looked him fairly in the face and asked if he would be very long away. Then Maynard went down to his boat while the two made ready for Mr. Noel's departure, and formed hasty plans for the time when the minister should be in England.

Returning an hour later, the lieutenant met them at their door. "Before we go," he said, cheerily, "can I not see the little girl?"

Mrs. Noel's face, despite its marks of tears, was wreathed in smiles. "Indeed you shall," she exclaimed, leading the way to the house. "You'll find her waiting for you."

They entered the room together. In a canopied crib in one corner of the apartment, lay the child. Her great blue eyes were open, and fixed themselves upon Maynard as the three bent over the crib. Mrs. Noel took her in her arms.

"Look at this great tall man, Alice. He's little Arthur's father, and little Arthur, you know, is going to be a great big man like this one is, and you are going to be his wife. Are you glad?"

The baby's mouth opened in a droll, childish laugh, and she stretched out her chubby arms to Maynard.

"That settles it," laughed Maynard. "She can hear the wedding bells now." Then after a few words of the flattery which women love—although they say not—the lieutenant led the way from the house.

Together they went down the path, Maynard walking ahead, and after him the minister and his wife, trying each to cheer the other. The ship's gig, guided by a stout sailor named McFaddin, came from

behind a clump of willows and lay alongside the landing. The lieutenant and Mr. Noel stepped aboard, the oars dipped into the stream, and the journey was begun.

Mrs. Noel stood on the bank and watched the boat until it swept around the bend; while the minister, looking back toward the little village, saw standing on the shore the frail woman whose sweet face and lovelit eyes as they then looked were fixed in his mind through all the years that came after.

Alone she stood there, a slight figure clad in creamy white. She gave one last look down the bare expanse of water, and a sob rose in her throat as she cried out into the solitude, "Oh! James, when shall I see you again?" In her frenzied fancy she thought that she heard an answer. Startled, she turned and looked up. A white-throated kingfisher darted past her with a hoarse cry. She shuddered, for the sound was an ill-omened one and the bird seemed to laugh in her face.

CHAPTER IV

Consuming Flames

IN after days, when the man's deeds were known to the world, the people of New Bern wondered greatly that John Cantwell had for more than a score of years stood in their eyes a type of the upright man. And, viewing his life in the light of his deeds, strange indeed does it seem that his cloak had never fallen from him. True, some had seen what lay behind the veil of his great deceit, but these were silent for many years; and two, who knew quite as much as any of the others, never spoke save in the after-evidence which mortal power could not control.

Deeply laid were Cantwell's plots, and no one man, or woman either, knew a tenth part of them all. Yet their very mystery, and the perfect ease with which they passed on to success, made the weakest link in the chain of circumstance that brought the after ruin. And, with it all, twice—yea, thrice—did he plot beyond his own great reach. Had it not been for this over-stepping he would have died as he had lived, honored and respected by all except those—few in number as the fingers of a man's one hand—who knew the fellow for what he was.

As on a playhouse stage the paint and the sham

seem naught but the veriest truth, so in Cantwell's life did everything which the ingenuity of a devil's craft could work to that end proclaim to the world virtues which were but an empty show hung upon a fabric of treachery and falsehood.

Nowhere was the man's machinery of hypocrisy more glaring than in the office-room in which he handled his West Indian trade and voiced the thunderings of the law. Upon its walls were hung prints from the masters, of The Crucifixion, The Temptation, The Death of Ananias and Sapphira, and Daniel in the Lions' Den. Besides these, in gilded frames, were the Ten Commandments, with illuminated border, and a chart exhibiting some man's notion of a Christian's path to heaven; which last must have had its irony in Cantwell's mind. Then, over the desk at which the 'Squire was wont to write his bills, his briefs, and his sermons, were three framed mottoes, blazoned in great letters of crimson and gold: "Waste Not, Want Not," "Everything in its Time," and "Honesty is the Best Policy." The first two were well enough; but the third—well, Cantwell kept it as a man listens to an adversary's argument, because he took no stock in it.

The morning was half gone. Cantwell, seated at his desk, seemed awaiting a visitor.

Although he sat very quietly, scanning with more than casual interest the pages of a bulky work on chemistry, his eyes were often raised to the window that opened toward the street, and several times within the half hour had he looked at his watch and frowned. He was waiting, and impatient; yet when a knock

sounded upon the door he gave a sudden sta and half arose from his seat. Then he smiled and sank back into the chair. The knock was repeated.

"Come in," called Cantwell.

The door was opened by a servant. "Mrs. Maynard," was the announcement. The 'Squire rose, and moved toward the door. His visitor, superb and queenly in mien and dress, met him at the entrance.

"My dear cousin," exclaimed Cantwell, with open admiration in his restless eyes, "you excel even yourself this morning. I feel amply repaid for the hour I have waited."

Mrs. Maynard laughed lightly as releasing her hand from his over-ardent grasp she crossed to a chair by the window. "An hour, you say! Well, forgive me; my little Belgian clock is dropping backward in the race. But, really, I —"

"No, no, no; the delay caused me no inconvenience, be assured of that." The 'Squire, with a stately bow, returned to a seat at his desk. "The lieutenant sailed yesterday, I saw; and the worthy Mr. Noel, also. God speed them both."

Mrs. Maynard nodded her acknowledgment. Her woman's discernment had caught the indifference which lay beneath the 'Squire's fair-spoken phrases, and she wasted no words in replying.

The 'Squire smiled urbanely.

"And little Arthur — how is he?"

"But slightly better. The medicine you gave the other day seems to make the little fellow drowsy and dull. Did you intend that it should?"

'Squire Cantwell's face was averted as he bent

over his desk to sharpen a quill. After a moment he looked up.

"Well — hardly," was his slow response, "but there are conditions, particularly in so young a patient, when almost any medicine would cause some degree of lethargy. But there is really no cause for anxiety."

"You think, then, that the child is not seriously ill?"

"Seriously! Indeed, no. Were he so, I should send you to Doctor Boggs. The boy is doing well, very well indeed."

Cantwell smiled blandly as he voiced his opinion, for he took pride in his knowledge of nostrums. Then he leaned forward with his elbows on the desk.

"Now, Margaret," he said, with a certain business-like brusqueness, "you told me you had some papers to be examined—something of a legal nature, as I understand."

Mrs. Maynard took a small bundle of documents from her hand-bag.

"Yes," she said, "my husband advised me to have you register these papers, if you thought it necessary to give them legal force. One of them, I believe, may be of personal interest to you."

'Squire Cantwell took the documents and rapidly read them through. Mrs. Maynard, as she watched him, could well have been the model for a painter's masterpiece. The rich harmony of the deep brown of her eyes and the raven blackness of her hair with the rose of her cheeks and the vivid blood-red of her lips would have made her singularly beautiful, even had her features been less striking than they were. That great statesman, Governor Gabriel Johnston, had said

that Margaret Dudley Maynard was the loveliest woman in the American provinces; whereat Lord Keightley, scanning her classic features and meeting the look of her great dark eyes, had said, "Your Excellency means the loveliest woman in the universe." And the old lord seldom spoke praise of any woman.

At last Cantwell laid the papers aside and looked up at the lieutenant's wife.

"This last paper does interest me," he said, slowly, tapping with his long index finger the back of an elaborately engrossed deed; "but only upon your account and that of your husband. The interest of remainder vesting in me rests upon a contingency that probably will not occur. Your possession, cousin, is almost absolute."

"But if my son should die before reaching the age of twelve?"

"In that case the property, at your death, might revert to me or my heirs. But in the first place, your little Arthur is not likely to die within the next ten years; children under such circumstances seldom do. And then, if you will notice, the language of this conveyance is, that if you have no son who shall reach the age of twelve years, then, and then only, shall 'all the goods and chattels, real and personal, herein above described, be conveyed to John M. Cantwell'; and so forth. It does not say that this particular son must be twelve years of age, but a son, any son; and remember, Margaret, that you are practically at the beginning of what may be a long married life; there might be —"

"Yes," interrupted Mrs. Maynard, lowering her eyes, "there might; but still 'a son' may prove to be

this son only." A smile crossed the face of the justice.

"That remains to be seen. But," and he dropped the documents into a desk drawer, "you have not told me, cousin, why this brother, Richard Dudley, did not leave you his property without conditions."

"He and my husband had some misunderstanding, the work, perhaps, of a secret enemy." In her earnestness, she raised her eyes to his. The 'Squire's face was expressionless as marble.

"But, passing over that," she continued, quickly; "the papers will require registration?"

"Undoubtedly. I will have it done to-day. Now," and he arose from his chair and came toward her, "is there anything else you wish done?"

"Yes. I want a good safe boat with two trustworthy men, the day after to-morrow. I'm going up to Neusioc to bring down Mrs. Noel, the minister's wife. Our husbands have gone away together and we think it only fair that we, too, should join forces; so I've asked her to come down to spend a month with me. You can get me the boat?"

"To be sure. I'll send McFaddin and another good man."

"McFaddin? I thought he belonged to the *Wasp*."

"He did up to the hour she sailed. His time expired, and I've hired him for the *Leopard*."

"Ah, yes. And you're sure the boat won't leak? I'm — But, quick! Who is that?" She and Cantwell, rising hastily, reached the window at the same time.

"That?" The 'Squire laughed. "A young squaw with a papoose strapped to her back. No unusual —"

"Go after her — send some one to see if the child isn't white." She spoke excitedly. "Please, John, send some one. I'll — I'll explain afterward."

The 'Squire flushed as she used his Christian name. He opened the door quickly.

"McFaddin! McFaddin!" he called.

"Aye, aye, sir," sounded a gruff voice in the hall.

Cantwell stepped outside the door. A whispered conversation followed, and the 'Squire, returning, sat down beside his visitor.

"He has gone," he said, briefly.

"Thank you, very much. I want to know because my husband and Mr. Noel brought a boy down from Neusioc yesterday. He was searching for an Indian woman who had stolen his sister's child. I thought the girl who passed here might be the one."

Cantwell's mask-like face seemed whiter than ever. "What was the boy's name?" he asked, looking down as he played with his watch-charm.

"John Ross."

"Is he here yet?" Cantwell asked, quickly.

"No, I think not."

"Who is his sister?"

"Mary Ross — Matthews, rather; for she married some worthless fellow, who afterward deserted her."

"Ah, yes. I recall the case. An unprincipled rascal, this Matthews. I met him once. But who is the Indian girl?" He raised his head, and their eyes met.

"Sequa, a Neusioc."

The 'Squire's glance wavered a little, and a quick flush rose to his temples.

"Sequa," he repeated, musingly. "I do not know the woman." But something in his manner belied his words, and Mrs. Maynard's eyes flashed with a sudden surprise.

When he spoke again it was upon another subject.

"While we wait for McFaddin, have you no other business to discuss?"

"Yes, and I nearly forgot it, too. I need some money, Mr. Agent, quite a little sum. After Mrs. Noel comes down here, she and Madame DeVere and I are going to Wilmington for a pleasure trip. I am the instigator of the plot, and all expenses will be mine. So, money, good 'Squire! Money!" She laughed as she held out her hand.

"How much, cousin? Times are close, you know, and rents hard."

"Now, now, 'Squire! don't stint, or you'll make me find another agent. Calvin Brown paid you a quarter's rent yesterday. Come!" And she shook her hand with mock impatience. The 'Squire, fairly beaten, gave a low chuckle.

"Tell me when to stop," he said, taking a roll of bills from his pocket, and counting them one by one into her outstretched palm. She spoke when Cantwell had but two bills left.

"Thank you, truly. Keep the rest until the next time."

Cantwell smiled dryly. "May it be far distant, cousin. You are —"

A great shouting came from outside the house.

"Fire!" sounded a hoarse voice in the street.

"Fire! Fire!" echoed a dozen others.

Cantwell rushed through the hall to the front door.

"Where?" he shouted.

"Lieutenant Maynard's," came the answer.

An anguished cry came from the parlor. "Oh! my child. My child! Can't you save him?"

Hatless, the 'Squire dashed down the steps and darted up the street. The alarm had been long delayed. When he reached the house it was a mass of raging flame. Cantwell broke through the crowd. Some one called him.

"Too slow, 'Squire; we've got the furniture — all exceptin' one room."

"Which room?" thundered the 'Squire.

"The south one," was the answer.

Cantwell was deadly pale. Mrs. Maynard, breathless and sobbing, pushed through to his side.

"My child!" she moaned. "Where is he?"

The men looked stupidly at one another. One hysterical woman screamed. A tall negro with a bloody rag about his head elbowed his way to the front.

"Whar be yer boy, Missis?"

"In the south room."

The black shook his head.

"Stairs is done broke, Missis; I went down wid 'em."

She seemed not to hear him.

"Is there no hope?" she asked, with slow utterance, like one speaking in a dream.

Cantwell pointed to the terrible furnace before them.

The answer was plain. From what had been the

south wing the flames leaped in a roaring, twisting column fifty feet above the walls.

If Margaret Maynard saw Cantwell's gesture or heard the words of the throng about her, she made no sign. Silent, motionless, she stood there, as senseless as a statue carved in marble; and upon her lips lingered a faint, dreamy smile. So it was that they who saw her knew that somewhere behind that pure white forehead a little vein or a tiny nerve had ceased its working; and that the woman knew naught of the world that moved about her.

. . . . . .

Out on the wide Atlantic, hugging the coast toward the shoals of Hatteras, reeled the *Wasp* under full sail. Her commander, leaning on the after-rail, watching the sea as it rolled away in their wake, was thinking of his wife and their baby Arthur.

"How happy we'd all be," he said softly, to himself, "if I could walk in on them now — God bless them both!"

He looked, smiling, toward the hazy shore lines of the Old North Province. But he was a hundred miles too far away to see the pillar of smoke and fire that writhed angrily above the little town of New Bern.

CHAPTER V

Some Further Tricks of Fate

THE morning of the following day dawned bright and clear. The road that led from New Bern to the Pamlico shores stretched broad and level beneath its vista of towering interbranching cypress trees, its white length touched here and there by a gleam of ruddy gold as the sunlight pierced the leafy maze above and played upon the sands of the travelled way.

The sun had climbed but an hour high when 'Squire Cantwell, on a chestnut mare of Eastern breeding, rode slowly up the highway toward the old town. Where he had been at such an early hour did not appear, nor did it in any way affect the things which happened afterward. What played a part, however, in the forming of the great web which was of the 'Squire's spinning, was the point toward which his mettled steed was now bearing him; for that point was the house of McFaddin, who, a few days before, a sailor on the *Wasp,* had left his Majesty's service to enter that of Cantwell. It was this man's house which now sheltered the child that Sequa had tried to carry to Cantwell. This explains why the 'Squire was making his way toward the sailor's home. It also makes clear the presence of McFaddin himself, trudging

along the road beside the rider's stirrup. The two men were talking; and quiet though the roadway was, Cantwell had to bend often over his saddle-bow to catch the utterances of the over-cautious sailor.

As they neared a little log-cabin that stood a short way from the roadside, Cantwell leaned again toward his fellow-traveller: "And so you have the child?" he asked — although he knew as well as did the man himself.

The sailor raised his black eyes to Cantwell's face. "Yes, yer honor," he answered, smiling, as he shifted his tobacco in his cheek.

"Where?"

"At the house with the old woman."

"Boy or girl?"

"Boy, yer honor."

"Describe him to me."

"He's all rig'lar an' ship-shape, yer honor; 'most too much sail fer the ballast, maybe; but more 'n that I don't see nothin' pertic'lar. He jes' cries, that's all. He'd drownd the bo's'n's whistle in a sou'west gale. 'Pears old enough to talk; but we can't git nothin' out'n him but 'Mama! Want mama!' an' sich stuff."

"What did the squaw say about him?"

"Did n't wait to say nothin'. When she saw me overhaulin' her she drapped the baby, blanket an' all, an' steered fer the woods."

"You 've done well; but I'm in doubt yet: I must see the child, McFaddin."

"Easy 'nough, yer honor. There's my cabin, a ship's length up the road; an' there's the old 'oman lookin'

out o' the winder. Jes' heave me yer bowline an' I'll make fast to a tree while ye git down."

Reaching the cabin and fastening the horse, Cantwell, dismounting, followed McFaddin into his humble abode.

"Hi, Peggy!" thundered the sailor; "here's the 'Squire come to see the little un'."

McFaddin's wife, stout, brawny and sunburned, held out a calloused hand to Cantwell. As he spoke his graceful words of greeting his keen eyes saw that the woman's face was a good one, strong and kind and motherly. He asked to see the child; and the sailor's wife led him to the bed-room, where the baby lay sleeping on a couch, by his open hand a wooden spoon, his plaything in his waking hours. The 'Squire bent down and studied the little round face. Then he shook his head and murmured something under his breath.

"Know him, sir?" asked the foster-mother.

"No, Peggy; but I think he's the child that some of my friends are looking for. Keep him here until I find out. In the meantime, you must have something for the expense of taking care of him. I don't know that I'll ever get it back; but you know, Peggy, we must be kind to the unfortunate if we hope to get on in the world."

"That's so, yer honor; an' for my part, I think this here's a case in p'int. A poor innercent thing, stole from his nat'ral mother by a low-down Injun squaw as tried to make a dirty papoose of 'im. I hates 'em, sir — them Injuns. I hates 'em 'cause they 're red; an' I hates 'em 'cause they grease their ha'r — hates 'em fer nigh onto ev'rythin'. But as you say, yer

honor, bein' we 're poor, it would go sorter hard with us to care fer the little thing fer somebody as is better placed than us; an' all fer nothin', too. Hows'ever, I'd 'a' done it, pay or no pay."

"Spoken like a Christian woman, Peggy."

The 'Squire smiled upon her with benign complacency.

"Nothing is lost by good actions. Bread cast upon the waters will return again, you know. Now, my good woman, here is some money. When it's gone, call upon me for more. But, hark you, Peggy, and you, too, McFaddin, keep all this business to yourselves; and, above all, never mention my name in connection with it. I do not care to become a subject of common talk."

"No more do I, yer honor," protested Peggy, her face reddening under its coat of tan. "But when the neighbors comes in —"

"They must n't come in, Peggy — at least, not yet. I have my reasons, which I cannot tell you now. So, for the present, not a word of it, or —"

"You can depend on us, yer honor," McFaddin interrupted. "Peggy's all right."

"But —" started Peggy, looking from one man to the other.

"But me no buts, old 'oman. You know yer all right, 'specially when I says it. Tell the 'Squire so."

"Of course, I —"

"That'll do. I knowed you'd say so, Peggy."

Cantwell watched them closely. Then, moving to the door, he said, with a smile of satisfaction, "We 're agreed now; I will come again to-morrow."

McFaddin followed him to the roadside. Cantwell uttered some trifling jest, and the two men parted with laughter, the 'Squire turning his horse's head toward New Bern.

True to his word, Cantwell returned at noon of the next day. Seated upon a log out of ear-shot of the cabin, he and McFaddin talked for an hour; but the look upon the sailor's face betrayed dissatisfaction, and the rigid set of the 'Squire's jaw showed, in turn, the stubbornness of his determination.

McFaddin was speaking. "I don't like it — with all respeck to yer honor. Ef so be as you wants me to board a Frencher, or, fer that matter, a Britisher — fer it's all the same to me ef the shiners is there — I'm squar' on hand. That's fightin' 'g'inst men. But babies — that's another kind o' game."

"But the child's in my way, McFaddin."

"That ain't no concern o' mine. Ef it's the baby o' that gal up the river, she's give it up 'fore now. Her brother's gone back, and that's goin' to be the last of it. Let the old woman keep him. He'll be a kind o' comfort-like, when I'm a-cruisin'."

"Too many prying eyes and busy tongues around us, McFaddin," protested Cantwell. Then, with ill-disguised impatience, "but manage the details your own way. Lose the brat, or send him off so far he'll never come back. Remember, work this right and you ship as mate when the *Leopard* sails again."

"Aye, yer honor; and thanky. I'll do my best to deserve yer compliment. But this here bus'ness — well, give me time. I'll fix it if I can."

"I prefer to be served promptly. Take your time,

but be sparing of it. Now, let's go in and try your wife's persimmon beer. By the way, do you keep your secrets from her?"

"When I can. Peggy's mighty peart at findin' things out; but we've got her guessin' now. Fearin' accidents, I won't tell her, neither. But Peggy's all right."

Mrs. McFaddin, her face a little flushed, met them at the door.

"Bring out yer home-made beer, Peggy, dear?" said the sailor. "The 'Squire wants to see the color of it."

She did as she was bidden, and the jug and the glasses made merry music for several minutes; then the 'Squire, taking some spices from his waistcoat pocket, placed a pinch in his mouth. "Well, Peggy, may I see the two-year-old?"

"Certain, sir," was the answer, as the old woman led the way into the bed-room. "But he's sick, yer honor; got a fever, I'm afeerd. No wonder, neither; don't see why he didn't die, trudged about the country a-steamin' in that 'ere blanket fer I don't know how many days, an' nothin' to eat but Injun swill. But, hush ye! He's sleepin' now."

The Good Samaritan, bending over the luckless wayfarer on the road that led to Jericho, could not have looked with kindlier eyes upon the stranger whom he befriended than did 'Squire Cantwell, the pious justice of New Bern, upon the little child on Peggy's bed. Stooping down, he felt the baby's pulse.

"Why yes, Peggy; the child has a burning fever. We must stop that. I'll ride down this afternoon with

some powders for him. Poor little fellow! I wish I had the medicine now."

His voice seemed to betray great concern, and he hurried away without stopping for an exchange of adieus.

The sound of his horse's hoofs had hardly died in the distance when Peggy turned abruptly to her husband.

"Bob," she asked, sharply, "whose child is this?"

"Blast my peepers ef I can guess, Peg."

"Whose do you think?"

"I don't think. I've gi'n it up."

"Oh! Bob McFaddin. Can't you tell nothin' to yer wife? But I'll call in Poll Johnson; it'll take more'n me to watch this 'ere baby."

"Call nobody. You told the 'Squire you wouldn't."

"There's where yer wrong. You promised, not me."

"Didn't you say, 'Of course,' when we squeezed you up in a corner? Certain you did, an' you've got to stick to it — stick to it like a man, ef you know what that means."

"Ef I've got to keep it from other folks, I won't have it kept from me. Tell me the hull thing, or I'll blow."

"Blow an' be da — well, jest blow. I told you all I know about the thing."

"But I heerd you talkin', Bob."

"The devil an' Tom Walker! What did you hear?"

"I didn't hear nothin' 'bout no Tom Walker; but as to the other feller — I come pretty close to seein' him and hearin' 'im, too."

"Now, be sens'ble, old woman; what did you hear?"

"You know what he said about pryin' eyes an' busy tongues?"

"Did you hear that?"

"Never mind, Bobby. An' yer goin' to be mate on the *Leopard?*"

"Blast it! you heard the hull thing."

"An' yer goin' to lose the youngster, be you?"

"Oh! say —"

"Or send him clean away, eh?"

"Oh! the —— thunder! I mean. Come, I'll shut yer mouth by givin' you the hull story."

Thus did Peggy learn the 'Squire's plot against the child which she had already learned to love. For several hours afterward her eyes gleamed ominously, and she muttered strange things to herself as she worked about the house.

When the 'Squire came at four o'clock in the afternoon, Peggy, radiant with smiles, met him at the door.

Cantwell greeted her cheerily. "My good woman, how fresh and young you look! How is the little boy? Still feverish? Too bad, too bad. Well, we must cure him for the sake of his mother, whoever she may be. Here are the powders. Start them about bedtime. One will be enough to-night; give the rest at hourly intervals to-morrow."

Peggy followed the instructions to the letter; but when the following day had nearly passed the child was still very ill. At sunset of this second day the 'Squire came again.

"I begin to feel interested in the little fellow," he said, by way of introduction. "I think he is some better; but he is threatened with tetanus — lockjaw, you know. There, don't wake him, but give him another powder when he wakes from his nap."

"The powders is gone," Peggy responded; "used the last one two hours ago."

"True; I forgot. Let's see; I think I've got some more in my pocket; if — I — have n't — ah! yes here is another dose. Give him that."

As he handed the blue paper to Peggy, the watchful woman saw that the 'Squire's hand trembled, and that his eyes avoided hers.

An hour later the child awoke, moaning piteously. Peggy gave him a drink of water. Then she took the paper of powder and crossing to the window stood looking reflectively down the road. "Bob," she said, at last. "Ef the gal up the river's this child's mother, who's his daddy?"

"The 'Squire knows; it's out o' my jurydiction."

"What'll you bet 'tain't the 'Squire hisself?"

McFaddin stood up with a jerk; a sudden light came into his eyes. "Peggy," he said, in an awed whisper, "I'll be durned ef I don't think yer right."

Peggy was silent a moment, looking down at the blue-wrapped medicine.

"Bob," she said, finally, "The 'Squire give me this 'ere powder for the baby. I ain't goin' to try it on him."

"Why not? Didn't the others go all right?"

"Yes, but this is diff'rent."

"Who'll you try it on? Not on me, ef I knows myself."

"Take it out and give it to Bowzer, that nasty dog o' your'n."

Bob, pulling nervously at his black side-whiskers, took the paper gingerly in his fingers and went out of the kitchen door. It was nearly a quarter of an hour before he returned; and when he entered the room his face was grey with horror.

"Ef there's a God in heaven," the sailor blurted out, "he ought to take that 'ere 'Squire by the neck an' beat 'im till he's dead."

"Did yer dog eat the powder?" asked Peggy, breathlessly.

"Did he? Well, I jes' reckon."

"What did it do?"

McFaddin raised his eyes. "What did it do! What did it do!" he shrieked. "It knocked Bowzer so stiff — oh! my Lord; I never —"

"But what did it do? Is Bowzer dead?"

"Dead? Yes, dead and gone to — no, jes' dead."

The couple sat for a long time in silence; then Peggy came to the fore with a masterpiece of ingenuity.

When the good 'Squire came to the McFaddin's house at sundown the next day, Bob, with solemn demeanor, met him and led the way to the bed-room. Peggy, her face buried in her handkerchief, sat beside something that, long and box-shaped, lay across a chair and was covered with a spotless sheet. The 'Squire gave a nervous start, and spoke with a great effort.

"I hope the child is better," he said, in a voice that sounded strange even to himself. Peggy looked up into his face. "He is dead," she said, simply. Cantwell

bowed his head. "I am shocked," he said, slowly. "Do you really mean dead?"

"Dead as the dev——as a herrin'," broke in McFaddin, with a queer quaver in his voice.

"When and how?" asked the 'Squire, his self-possession returning.

"As to when," answered Peggy, fixing her eyes upon his face, "he died the minute he took yer powders; as to how"— she shrugged her broad shoulders —"you said it was the lockyjaw."

"Just as I feared," said Cantwell, with a look of supreme resignation. "Tetanus is a terrible malady. What have you done with the — with the body?"

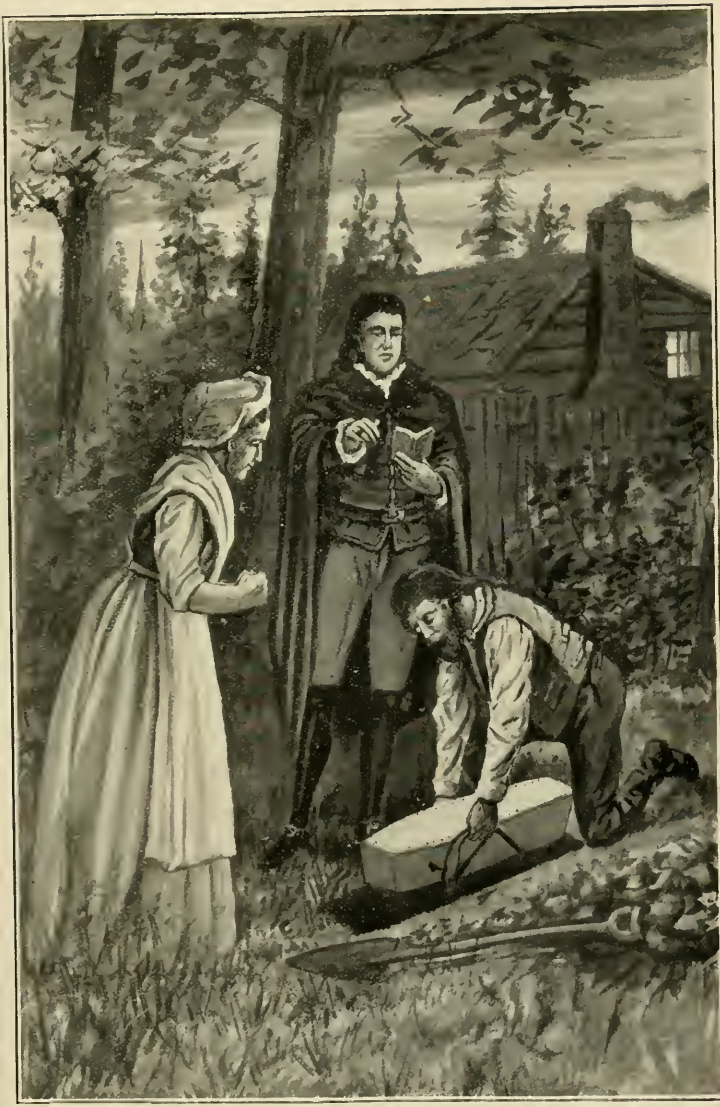
"I've jacked up a rough coffin," answered the sailor. "Couldn't keep him no longer; he outsmelt anythin' I ever run ag'in'."

"If you 've made the grave," gently suggested the 'Squire, "we might bury him now."

"Got it all fixed, 'Squire. Reckon you could read a few lines o' prayers, to make a kinder decent send-off? I —"

McFaddin was seized with a violent fit of coughing, but Cantwell nodded his assent, and they filed out into the yard and stood beneath a great tulip tree. There, silently, devoutly, as twilight deepened into night, 'Squire Cantwell read three pages of the solemn liturgy of the Church of England; and they committed Bowzer to his grave.

While this was happening, Peggy's white cat and the baby that Sequa had left in the road were slumbering quietly on a pile of blankets beneath the kitchen table; and, lest the child should cry at an



And they committed Bowzer to his grave.

inopportune moment, his silence had been assured by a liberal dose of sleeping-potion. Cantwell, when he did learn the truth — but that was long years afterward!

In the present day the things which happened in and around New Bern in the year of grace 1754 could not have occurred as they did. Within a week Sequa had stolen Mary Ross's child, the Reverend James Noel had left for England with but an hour's warning, the Maynard house, with its infant occupant, had been a prey to the flames, and Cantwell had, to his own mind at least, satisfactorily ridded himself and the rest of the world of the child which Mary Ross had borne to him. In the matter-of-fact days of the present the scarcity of Indian abductresses, the service of the transcontinental cables, the deluging powers of a battery of fire engines, and the intolerable officiousness of the coroner, the police, and the press would have stifled in embryo the plans which for twenty-two years kept the people of New Bern in a mist of perplexity.

Allowance must be made, of course, for the workings of Providence, which, being unsusceptible to improvement or patented evolutions, are about the same now as then. Providence played a leading part in the chain of events which began with Cantwell's birth and ended with his death. It was Providence which made Sequa mix matters most inexplicably; and the same power brought about the death of Bowzer and kept alive the babe in McFaddin's cabin. The rest of it was done by human deeds, both good and evil, which may or may not have been of free moral agency — who can say?

During the week which followed the theft of Mary

Ross's child the search for Sequa had been continued with untiring energy. Mrs. Noel had opened her house to Mary and the boy John, and, for the time, the cabin in the forest was deserted. But the efforts of Tetah, the chieftain, were of no avail; and if he, crafty and powerful as he was, failed to find the girl, who could do more? True, 'Squire Cantwell, in a long and kindly letter, had promised active aid; but, with all that, the justice admitted that he had never seen nor heard of Sequa. Which admission would have seemed strange to Tetah had he known it; but Tetah's belles lettres were scratches on rocks, and snakes carved on tree trunks, and he never read Cantwell's missive.

Still, in a quiet way, the search had gone on. John, seeking a clue of his sister's recreant husband, had journeyed to New Bern, there to make careful inquiry for his brother-in-law, and thus trace the trail of the serpent which might lead to Sequa. But the boy learned nothing there. Indeed, one man, a sailor with jet-black eyes and bushy side-whiskers, had told him that no such man as Matthews had ever lived in New Bern, or, to his knowledge, anywhere else in the length and breadth of the province. So the boy, returning tired and discouraged, announced that he had abandoned the search. Mary, too, had all but lost her upholding hope. Those whom she told the story of her baby's disappearance shrugged their shoulders and straightway regaled her with harrowing tales of like Indian outrages. One old Scotch woman, with more candor than consideration, made the avowal that the Cherokees and the Cotechneys held their great ceremonial dances in September, and, during the

ensuing orgies, ate nothing but the flesh of white infants. Mary, accepting this as of gospel truth, returned home and wept bitterly throughout the night.

Had the widow Ross been living, her daughter might have found comfort in her own home; but she, poor woman, had died soon after Matthews had left Mary in abandonment. As it was, all that the girl could do was to look to the minister's wife for sympathy. Nor did she go awrong in doing this, for Mrs. Noel, with kindliness immeasurable, kept open for her the gates of hope. Little wonder was it that between the two women was forged a chain of friendship that made their ways as one, and seemed to point them to the same goal.

When the day came which marked the close of the first week of her baby's absence, Mary, who had spent the night at the cabin in the woods, reached Neusioc at nine in the morning. There she found the minister's wife lying in bed with a severe cold. So Mary volunteered the management of the house for the day. Playfully decking herself with cap and apron of snowy linen, the comely girl, already attired in a gown of grey, looked like the saintly nurses that Mrs. Noel had once seen in the field camps of her father's army.

At the hour of noon Mary sat by the window in Mrs. Noel's room with the blue-eyed Alice, eight months old that very day, lying across her lap and cooing at the ceiling above.

Suddenly the sound of rapid hoof-beats sounded from the street. Mary arose, and, laying the baby upon the bed beside its mother, hurried to the door. She returned with a letter in her hand. "By a mounted

messenger," she said, handing the missive to Mrs. Noel. "It requires no answer, he said."

Mrs. Noel looked puzzled. "I expected a letter from Mrs. Maynard explaining why she failed to send a boat for me to go to New Bern Monday; but this is in a man's handwriting." After much study, she overcame her woman's habit of guessing at the outside of an envelope, and ruthlessly tore it open. "From Mr. Cantwell," she exclaimed, with some surprise. "I wonder —" Then relapsing into silence, she read the letter with eyes that told of ill tidings.

"Awful! Awful!" she said, as she sank back to her pillows. "Poor Margaret Maynard. Read it, Mary. I've never heard of anything more terrible." Mary took the letter. It read:

"Respected Madam: It is my painful Duty to acquaint you with the sad Calamity that will prevent my Kinswoman, Mrs. Maynard, from receiving you, for the present at least, as a Guest. She had just given me Instructions to send a Boat up for you, anticipating great Pleasure from your Visit, when the Calamity came. It grieves me to relate the horrible Tragedy; but I will give as brief a Recital as I can; knowing that every Word will be a Dagger to your friendly Heart.

"My respected Kinswoman, on leaving Home to visit me for the Arrangement of important Business, confided the care of her son, Arthur, to his Nurse. The boy was sleeping under the Influence of Narcotic Powders—he had been restless for several Days—and she charged the Nurse to keep close Watch in her Absence. A Chafing-Dish was in the Room on a Side Table, with a Lamp burning under it, to keep the Baby's Broth warm. It seems that the Nurse slipped away from the Child, and, according to universal Belief, left the Lamp in such careless Position that the Child, awaking restlessly, knocked it down and so set the House on fire.

"The House was burned, and the Child in it. The horrid Death of the Boy was too much for the Fortitude of my poor Cousin. Her Mind has given away, never, it is feared, to be recovered. Her Friend, Mrs. DeVere, is taking Care of her at present. The Child was almost entirely consumed—only a few of his Bones being left.

" 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.'

"God in His Providence has provided for the Care of the Estate during the Malady of our Afflicted Friend.

"In deep Distress, which I know is shared in your Christian Heart, I am, Madam, Your Obt. Svt. to Command,

" J. M. CANTWELL."

Mary laid the letter aside, her eyes moist with tears. "Why, Mrs. Noel!" she exclaimed; "it's the most horrible story I've ever read. God knows, it is hard enough to have one's baby stolen; but to have him burned — I can't bear to think of it!"

"Nor I," said Mrs. Noel, softly, taking little Alice's hand in her own.

They talked until dinner time of Mrs. Maynard and the news in Cantwell's letter, and in that talk Mary learned much of the romance surrounding the lives of the lieutenant and his wife.

With the coming of the twilight, the wind shifted to the northeast, and a cold, drizzling rain beat across the lower Neuse. The baby was sleeping quietly in her cradle; and Mrs. Noel and Mary, in the candle light, made fanciful predictions of the child's life throughout the coming years. In fact, none of these things ever came true; but that was not the child's fault; neither, as it developed, was it the mother's.

While they talked thus a wild gust of wind howled

about the house, and, in seeming answer, came the clangor of the great knocker on the front door. The women started nervously. The summons was repeated, and Mary, taking a candle with her, went to the hall. Mrs. Noel heard the door open, and felt the wind as it swept through the house. Then came Mary's voice. "Who are you?" it said.

"Me," was the guttural response.

"But my candle's blown out; I can't see you. Who are you?"

"Tetah; Peoperquinaiqua bobbasheelah."

The minister's wife laughed softly to herself, for she knew how little the answer meant to Mary. "Bring him in, Mary," she called. "It's Tetah."

With unseemly haste, the Indian, wet and muddy, rushed into the room. "Peoperquinaiqua?" he asked, looking quickly about the room.

"Gone to England, Tetah."

"Dove Eyes go quick — quick go!" exclaimed the chief.

"Go, Tetah? Where? Why?" Mrs. Noel raised herself on one arm, and looked into the tawny face with something like fear in her eyes.

"Cotechney steal Neusioc horse — Neusioc catch — take scalp," and he held up one grimy finger. "Cotechneys dig hatchet—go war path. Coreys help— no like Cherokees (Cherokees paleface bobbasheelah). Neusioc hear — send Tetah. Tetah go close — hide big tree — Cotechneys say come night — so much." And he clapped his hand twenty times to count two hundred. "Big whoop — kill — take scalp — burn Neusioc."

The women looked at one another with terror in their faces. Tetah continued.

"Peoperquinaiqua good to Tetah — Tetah tell squaw. Tetah warrior — stay fight — Dove Eyes go quick — take papoose." Then, without another word, he folded his blanket about him and left the house.

Fire and blood reigned in Neusioc that night, the one lighting the clouds for miles around, the other dying the sparkling waters that crept slowly down to the sound. The Neusiocs, forewarned by their chieftain Tetah, repulsed their allied enemies and drove them back to the forests. Four houses were burned; one was the village parsonage. And that attack on Neusioc was but the foreshadowing of one that came three years later and swept the little hamlet from the face of the earth.

Mrs. Noel, heeding Tetah's warning, had gone with Mary and the baby Alice to the home in the forest. There they watched in the sky the light of Neusioc's flames. But toward daybreak, the minister's wife, suffering from the exposure of her walk through the cold driving rain, was seized with a violent fit of coughing. She tried to muffle the sound by holding her handkerchief to her lips. As she did so, Mary gave a quick, low cry and hastened to the bedside. The handkerchief was dyed a deep red. This was but the beginning of the end; and throughout the morning and far past midday Mary watched by the side of the sufferer. But nothing that she did could relieve the violent, racking cough; and with every paroxysm Mrs. Noel gave of her life-blood.

At last the hour came when the coughing ceased.

It was in the warm afternoon that came after the rain. Out of doors the sun was bright and the forest rang with the music of the birds. In the front room of the log-house Mary sat beside the bed, holding Alice in her arms. Lying against her pillows, Mrs. Noel, her pallor intensified by the flush upon her cheeks, fixed her soft blue eyes upon the baby's face. As Mary watched her she could not refrain from thinking of what it had been to this frail woman to sacrifice the comforts of her father's house in Britain for the cheerless life of a Carolina village. Her revery was interrupted by the faint voice of the minister's wife.

"I've coughed so much, Mary," whispered the fair-haired woman, smiling into her companion's face, "that I am very tired and want to go to sleep." Her eyelids drooped a moment, then lifted again. "Tell James," she continued, with a wandering slowness, "to wake me when he comes." Then, to the laughing baby, "Good night, little girl; mother's going to sleep. Good night!" And Alice, as she had learned to do, reached out her little arms and laughed with childish glee.

The sweet, pure face turned slightly on the pillow, the dark lashes shut out the light of the eyes as clouds passing over the stars, and the little woman's lips parted in a weary sigh.

A flash of blue swept past the window; a white-throated kingfisher gleamed in the sunlight. Its hoarse cry echoed through the pines like a sorrowing wail. Mary saw the bird, and it seemed to laugh at the face upon the pillows.

CHAPTER VI

A Good Man Meets His Wife

A WEEK after Mrs. Noel's death there came to Mary Ross news concerning Sequa. For Jemmie Dow, a youth living in Neusioc, came one night to the cabin in the woods and told of a rumor which placed the Indian girl in New Bern. Without loss of time, therefore, Mary and John, leaving little Alice Noel with Mrs. Dow, set out at daybreak with cart and horse for the scene of Sequa's appearance.

Reaching New Bern late in the afternoon they stopped at an inn which bore a glaring sign-board, proclaiming it a place of "Entertainment for Man and Horse." Across the way from this hostelry stood a merchant's store, with doors and window sashes of brilliant yellow. Between the two lay the street, unpaved and level as a bowling alley.

Entering the inn, Mary's first move was to enlist the sympathies of the landlord's wife, a pleasant seeming woman with much in her face to tell of goodness of soul. To her, stranger though she was, Mary related her story of misfortune, and, at its close, asked, naturally enough, "Where can I go for aid? Who can help me?"

Then, so entangled was the situation, the innkeeper's

wife, with innocence unmeasured, scored another point for iron-handed circumstance. "Why, go to 'Squire Cantwell," she said, with great conviction. "Go to him by all means."

Mary's heart gave a bound of hope, remembering that this Cantwell, in his letter to Mr. Noel, had offered to aid untiringly in the search.

"Everybody," the woman continued, rubbing her hands with the satisfaction of one giving sound advice; "everybody goes to the 'Squire when nobody else can't help 'em. He's the smartest man in New Bern, an' the best man in the world, I reckon. To see 'im in church, a-lookin' so reverent-like, is 'most as good as a sermon. Yes, you certainly must see 'Squire Cantwell."

Thus it was that Mary, leaving John to search for Sequa, bent her steps to the home of John Cantwell, friend of governors and revered of the populace. And her heart beat high with hope, for she pictured the justice as a man with heart and soul of purest gold.

Leaving the inn, she crossed the street. At the door of the yellow-fronted shop she came face to face with a portly man of ecclesiastic look. She shrank back a trifle, then bent her head and went on her way toward the house on the terraced lawn. But she had met the light, shifting eyes of a man whom she had seen once before, in the better days gone by; and the thought of all that had since come into her life went like iron into her soul.

Further on she came to the mansion of the Cantwells. On the lawn beneath the great bay-windows stood a tiny boy, pulling buds from a rosebush in the

garden. By his side was a nurse girl, holding a sleeping baby. Entering the gate, Mary passed the girl and the children, and ascended the broad steps to the mansion's imposing front door. Half way up she met a woman attired in rustling silks and holding her head as befitted one of high degree. As they passed, each glanced quickly at the other, and Mary saw that the look on the woman's face was of pride, mingled with a certain sweetness which gave a rare charm to her clear-cut features. "Mrs. Cantwell," she thought, as she paused before the door and looked back at the shapely silk-clad figure. And she knew that she was right, for the boy left the roses and ran across the grass laughing and calling, "Mother, let me go, too."

A moment later, led by the 'Squire's servant, Mary entered Cantwell's study. Her eyes caught first the glare of the mottoes and scriptural pictures on the wall. Then she sought the face of John Cantwell, who sat behind his desk. A quick cry came to her lips; and she wavered a moment as she stood. Cantwell half arose. The smile of welcome froze upon his lips; and within his eyes was a gleam of fear.

It was Mary who broke upon the strained silence.

"You!" she cried, her voice tense with feeling. "You! — and so we meet again."

Cantwell opened his lips to speak.

Mary stayed him with a quick movement of her hand. "Hear me first," she said, with an imperious toss of the head. "So you are the good — the reverend — the esteemed — 'Squire Cantwell! Look up, John Matthews, and tell me, in the presence of these sacred things upon your walls, are you the noble 'Squire

Cantwell, whose virtues are the talk of all good people?"

"Mary," gasped the 'Squire, "do not judge me yet; remember how the Scriptures —"

"Hypocrite! Don't quote Scripture to me. Quoting Scripture" — her voice was bitter with sarcasm — "to me — your deserted wife!"

Cantwell straightened up with something like a laugh. "No; not wife, Mary. It's bad enough as it is; but not as bad as that."

"Not your wife! Were we not married with a license? and by a priest?"

The 'Squire, his self-control regained, smiled at her vehemence.

"If you examine," he said, dryly, "you'll find that no such license has ever been registered; and, as for the priest, he was a clever fellow of no particular profession, whose friendship could not deny me the service. It was his first and only performance in canonicals."

The cool impudence of this villainous confession staggered Mary. At first she did not grasp its meaning. Then, in a moment, the full consciousness of her degradation came over her. Raising her hands to her face, she dropped upon the sofa, and the one word, "Disgraced," came to Cantwell's ears.

He saw his advantage. "No," he said, gently, "not unless you choose to have it so. No one but you knows that John M. Cantwell and John Matthews are the same. Why tell it?"

It was a master-stroke, but Mary met the thrust with a firm guard. "Why tell it!" she exclaimed, rising

again to her feet. "Because I will not live a lie. I will tell it that this other one, she whom you now call your wife, may look to her license, and see who married her." She caught her breath, and her eyes flashed with her anger. "And more than this, good 'Squire Cantwell, I'll tell it to the king's councillor and to the courts."

Cantwell bit his lip. "Hold on, hold on!" he said, with a sneer; "this is no play-house, nor are we play-actors."

Mary gave no heed to his words. "And I'll find out for the sake of my boy if this that you have told me is true."

Whether from subtle policy or from a new-born admiration for the strength of her whom he had hitherto thought timid to the point of weakness, Cantwell altered his manner and his tactics. "Mary," he said, tenderly, with the soft-toned voice of the Matthews of old times, "I am not so great a villain as I represented myself a moment ago. You exasperated me — perhaps beyond prudence. I loved you from the first — I love you now." He saw her lips open as for an angry retort. "Wait, wait, for God's sake, hear me!" he cried. "When I first met you, that night when I came sick and a stranger to your door, I was already betrothed to the woman who is now my wife — the one you met when you came into the house. I did not love her; but — but she was rich and I was poor. I make no other excuse!

"When, recovering from the delirium of my illness, I told you my name was John Matthews, I told you the truth, but not the whole truth. My name is John

Matthews Cantwell. I kept back the surname because, looking into the future, I knew it would be hard to tear myself from you; and I did not wish to give my betrothed a clue by which to trace me out. When I came back to town, after submitting my surveys to Governor Johnston, I called upon Miss Creamly, determined to break off our engagement. Love in a cottage, I thought, would be better than indifference with wealth. But when I stood beside her, with all the elegance of luxurious life about me, romance — I'm ashamed to confess it — gave way to a meaner feeling; and I renewed my false vows.

"Before I saw you again the bans had been published, and I could not retract. Had I done so, I should have lost the patronage of the governor, who had been my warmest advocate with Miss Creamly. Without the governor and without money, I felt that I would be a burden to you. You were miles away, in the woods; and with little management I could keep you there. As Matthews I could marry you, and afterward be united, by what would really be an illegal ceremony, to Miss Creamly.

"There was only one man in the world to whom I could confide my trouble, and he was the one who acted as the priest. This man said that my plan might lead to indictment for bigamy. He said that Miss Creamly was of frail constitution, had consumption, and could live but a short time; and that, by marrying her first and securing you with the deception of a sham marriage, I would soon be free with an ample fortune to legalize our union and to make you independent. The plan may still be carried out. I stopped coming to

you because my wife, becoming jealous, had spies set upon me.

"Now, Mary, I have told you all that is to be told. Can you not forgive me?" He crossed to where she stood and tried to take her hand.

She drew back as from a viper's sting. "Do not touch me," she cried hoarsely, backing quickly away from him. "What kind of man are you, to talk of love in the same breath with crime? Your love — if love you call it — is as poisonous as your avarice. Forgive you? You should thank God that I do not kill you! I listened to you; now hear me. I saw your oldest child at the gate as I came in. He is younger than ours. I will not believe that our marriage came after the other; nor was ours the illegal one. Your face has told me more than your lips. I shall learn the truth from the priest himself."

"You'll never find him," said Cantwell, with a short laugh. "He has left the country."

"He has not. I saw him to-day."

Cantwell gave a violent start.

"Yes, I saw him an hour ago. No wonder you turn pale. I'll have his evidence before night, unless you confess that our marriage was legal. If you do confess it, I promise you — and you know that I will keep my word — I promise you never to disturb you unless you force me to it in defence of my reputation. This I will do for the sake of the innocent woman I met on the steps. She may want you; I do not. Now tell me, am I your lawful wife?"

Cantwell looked sharply into her face. "Yes," he said, after a moment, "you are."

"Write it."

"But — "

"Write it!"

The 'Squire stammered something inaudible. "I would rather — "

"Write it!" came the inexorable command.

"You will use it — "

"Only in self-defence and if you force me to it!"

Cantwell went to his desk and wrote the simple statement. Mary took it, read it through and slipped it into a pocket in her dress.

"Now, Mr. Cantwell," she said, coldly, "I must ask your aid in another matter. My little boy, John, has been stolen by an Indian woman. Can you help me to find him?"

Cantwell leaned back in his chair. "No," he said, slowly shaking his head. "I'm sorry, Mary; perhaps I should not tell you so abruptly, but the boy is dead."

Mary moved a step toward him. "Dead! How do you know that?" She stetched out her hands imploringly. "Oh! John, do not deceive me in this!"

"I wish that it might be untrue. I cannot prove it; but still I cannot doubt it. I have watched over you more than you know. I, too, searched for the Indian woman, and I found her. She did not have the child, and said that it was dead."

Mary sank into the chair by the window, and buried her face in her hands.

Cantwell crossed the room, and stood beside her.

"Mary," he said, gently, "I know what a shock it is to you. I feel it too keenly myself not to know how

it hurts you. Think how much worse it might be. Compare your case — our case — with that of poor Margaret Maynard."

Mary, catching her breath in broken sobs, seemed not to hear him.

"Her misfortune," continued Cantwell, "is worse even than you had known. Lieutenant Maynard is dead. The *Wasp* went down off Hatteras and not a soul reached the shore."

Mary started to her feet with a cry of horror. "Merciful Heaven!" she cried, "can this be true?"

Cantwell bowed his head. "Yes," he said, simply, "the news came in by the *Leopard*."

The *Wasp* was lost. The Rev. James Noel had been its passenger. Motherless, fatherless, the baby Alice could claim no home but Mary's. Filled with the thought of the orphaned child she started toward the door.

Cantwell stopped her. "Before you go," he said, resting his hand upon her shoulder, "tell me of our other child."

"What other?"

"Why, the youngest — the little girl."

Mary drew in her breath sharply. Cantwell did not know that the child had died months before.

A sudden thought flashed into her mind. "I left her at Neusioc," she said hurriedly. "I — I must go now. Let me pass."

"One question more: Her name is Mary?"

"I have changed it to Alice." She moved toward the door.

"But one thing more," said Cantwell, in a low

voice, as his hand rested on the knob. "I think it better that John Matthews should be dead."

"I agree with you — literally," answered Mary.

And they parted in the hall.

Cantwell stood at the window and watched her as she crossed to the inn. Then, playing mechanically with the curtain tassel, he looked musingly down at the flower-bed in front of the house.

"Literally!" he muttered, slowly. "What the devil did she mean by that!"

CHAPTER VII

A Bit of History

[*For those who like that sort of thing.*]

ANTWELL'S belief to the contrary notwithstanding, the Wasp had not foundered off Hatteras, but, with battened hatches and bare poles, had weathered the gale without the loss of sail or spar. Crossing the Atlantic, turbulent and angry with the storms of the equinox, the *Wasp* finally landed at Plymouth, and Mr. Noel went thence by stage to his brother's home. Within a month Henry, Lord Durham, had gone to his fathers; and title and estate fell to the Carolina missionary. But close upon his brother's death, came one day a letter from far-away New Bern. It told of the raid of the Cotcheneys and the Coreys and of the burning of Neusioc. And in its course it said, "I grieve to say that Mrs. Noel and the baby Alice were not spared, the parsonage having burned to the very ground." The signature at the letter's end was "J. M. Cantwell." So, many years passed before Lord Durham returned to the valley of the Neuse.

In North Carolina events moved slowly for several years. Arthur Dobbs took the reins of power in November, 1754, and spent something over ten years in disagreeing with his council and with the legislature.

During this period the people began to fret under the strictures of the government, which fretting caused excessive discomfort to the harassed old governor. When death gave this royal favorite a happy release from the cares of state, Lieutenant-Governor William Tryon qualified as Commander-in-chief and Captain-General of the Province of North Carolina. This was title enough even for Tryon, who delighted in swelling out his chest and reflecting upon his own greatness.

This Tryon was a soldier — as soldiers sometimes go — and his idea of government was the simple one that might and right (differing, as is seen, in but one letter) went together in indissoluble union. When councillors advised, "Conciliate," Tryon would bring forth a bombastic proclamation teeming with vague and direful threats. When wise heads said,"Arbitrate," then would Tryon strike a pose and thunder, "Disperse, ye rebels!" and another proclamation would be forthcoming. In fact, he wrote proclamations as some men have written epigrams, thinking them the all in all of his mission upon earth.

Having dreamed from the days of his youth of the glory of arms, and having learned in years past some little of the ways of war, Governor William proceeded to make a plaything of the royal army in the province. On one occasion, when Tryon was suffering from want of amusement, he mustered his troops and marched them across the province from seashore to mountains, in a time of perfect peace, for the purpose of marking a boundary line to be respected by the Cherokee Indians. This delightful excursion won Tryon great glory in

his own estimation; but the honest taxpayers, venturing a degree of free thought, concluded that a second-rate surveying corps, eating but little and drinking less, could have made a very serviceable boundary line without the aid of a ravenous army, with men and horses whose stomachs knew no fill. So well did Tryon comport himself in this matter that the Cherokees, who possessed an admirable sense of the fitness of things, gave to Governor William the name of "The Great Wolf," which was an unkind defamation of a very honest sort of animal.

In general, it might be said that Tryon possessed every quality which a man should not possess, and was lacking in most of those which go to the making of a praiseworthy gentleman. Humanity to him was but a word of eight letters, that might mean one thing or another. His freedom from religious intolerance was a virtue taking equal rank with a savage's disregard for decent clothing: his religious principles, like the barbarian's modesty, being greatly in the negative.

The tidal wave, born of the love of liberty, which finally swept the king's minions back to Britain, gained much of its force in this sparsely populated province. The commissioned officers of the crown, and the multitudinous rank and file of petty office-holders, cultivated a great and growing greed of other people's gold. And these other people, already overburdened with taxation, resented the extortions from their very start.

The Stamp Act, which inflamed American minds from the northernmost province to its furthest sister in the South, stirred North Carolina to the heart. The

provincial legislature was in serene and peaceful session when advices of the passage of this act came from the royal Parliament. The excitement was intense; and Tryon made terrific haste to prorogue the legislature, after a session of but fifteen days, that the people's representatives might not raise a storm which should reach the throne and bring the king's disfavor upon his beloved self.

Then it was that John Ashe, revered of all Carolinians, said to Tryon that the odious Stamp Act would be resisted by the people even to blood and to death. And Tryon knew Ashe for a man who spoke advisedly.

The wily governor, seeing clearly that the breaking of the whirlwind which lay within the cloud that overhung the province would bring about his official ruin, kept the legislature out of business throughout the life of the Stamp Act. Fearing, however, that something might arise to bring the rays of indignation to a burning focus, Tryon exerted himself to win the favor of the people. He mingled with them, and, with surpassing tact and hospitality, played the host at many banquets. But, although a man's heart may sometimes be reached through his stomach, his appetite fails before the grasping hand of the tax-gatherer.

Then came his Majesty's sloop-of-war *Diligence,* freighted with stamped paper for use (on payment of due consideration) by the disgusted colonists. Hardly had the vessel's anchor touched the bottom of the Cape Fear River before John Ashe, of New Hanover (helping keep good his prophecy to Tryon), and Colonel Waddell, of Brunswick, placed themselves at

the head of a band of patriots, and proceeded to give the master of the *Diligence* the greatest fright of his life. After the trembling sailor had sworn to land no stamped paper on Carolina's soil, the patriots marched to the governor's palace and called upon Tryon to desist from all efforts to enforce the Stamp Act. Then they demanded James Houston, the stamp master for North Carolina. But James kept very quiet, and made no effort to meet those who so eagerly sought him. The crowd called again, and more loudly than before. But Tryon said, "Gentlemen, I cannot accede to such a turbulent demand; but if you will take formal action, and do so and so and thus and thus, I will give the matter my consideration."

It happened that the people wanted the stamp master, not the governor's consideration — which was a flimsy thing at best. So they called, "Houston! Give us Houston, or we'll burn your palace to the ground!" And Houston was produced forthwith.

It is highly probable that the stamp master looked upon that hour as his last. Whatever his thoughts, he suffered himself to be led to the public market-house, where, instead of being hung, he was sworn by a solemn oath to perform none of the official duties assigned him. Then, set free and wondering how he still lived, Houston found his way back to the palace, where he and Tryon comforted one another with caustic observations upon people who aspired to human rights.

After this throb of the popular pulse, Tryon made a frantic effort to persuade the people of the province to think his way. He doubtless overlooked the fact

that he was paid to think as he did, and that the people did the paying without having the privilege of choosing their goods. The governor implored the forbearance of the citizens, and begged for their advice. At public meetings, with his hand over his heart, he bowed and smiled on all men, believing such benignity to be the most masterful of flatteries. It seems strange that, playing such a gracious part, his Excellency was meanwhile planning to open upon these very people the vials of the royal wrath.

Tryon's conciliatory labors ended abortively. Taking advantage of an outpouring of the people to witness a general muster of the militia in New Hanover in February of the year 1766, the governor prepared a barbecue which was to be such a barbecue as had never before been given beneath American skies. The most prodigious ox in all North Carolina was cooked and placed upon a great stout-legged table. To wash down the beef was beer in many barrels. The governor was there, with bland and fatherly smile; the multitude was there, with some curiosity and with much fixedness of purpose; the feast, also, was there and waiting; but peace and harmony were afar off.

A few minutes before Tryon remembered a pressing business engagement elsewhere, a score of sturdy men lifted the roasted ox from the table and threw it into the river, while some others of the crowd emptied the beer casks upon the ground. In one respect the feast met Tryon's expectations: never before had American skies smiled upon such a barbecue. This episode went to show that Tryon's cajolery availed him little while the Stamp Act hung dark and cloudlike over the land.

Arising from this incident, a duel of fatal termination was fought between Alexander Simpson, master of his Majesty's sloop-of-war *Vixen*, and Thomas Whitechurst, lieutenant of the same vessel. Simpson openly praised the exhibition of the self-respect of the North Carolinians; while Whitechurst (a relative, by the way, of Lady Tryon's) favored the governor. Whether the captain's skill or his espousal of a just cause served him in good stead, he was the victor in the duel. He was apprehended and was tried before Judge Berry, with the result of full acquittal. This was displeasing to Tryon, who was fond enough of the law when its verdicts suited his views, but who launched furious proclamations when the courts essayed to set imprudent precedents. So the governor summoned Judge Berry to his presence. The interview was not a long one; but the poor justice saw such menace in Tryon's demeanor that, leaving the palace, he ripped himself open with a penknife and suffered a horrible death.

Simpson fled from the colony, assisted by William Maynard, once lieutenant and afterward captain of his Majesty's sloop-of-war *Wasp*. Maynard, having resigned his commission in the royal navy, had returned to North Carolina, allying himself with the cause of the Regulators, and having a price set upon his head by the governor

The Stamp Act died in due course of time, and Tryon rolled up his sleeves and, crowning himself with a wreath of laurel, indited a wordy proclamation, which the people received with great joy. Then his Excellency, seeing the good humor of the populace,

rushed through the assembly a bill appropriating a large sum of money for the building of a palace to protect the gubernatorial head from the weather. At the same time the legislature, bending to the governor's opinion that King George had repealed the Stamp Act out of love for him, brought together some pieces of good, fertile land and inflicted upon this tract the county name of Tryon. Later on, when that gentleman's renown had ceased to be a thing by which to conjure, the sovereign people split this Tryon county into two, which were then given the names which still are theirs — Lincoln and Rutherford.

Tryon worked harder for his palace than he ever labored for the good of the people of his province. Nor did he work alone; for his wife dined and feted and flattered every man and woman whose influence seemed worth a shilling; and her sister, Esther Wake, beautiful and of wondrous fascination, won to the governor's hobby every one with whom she talked. As an outcome, the people of the province were taxed fifteen thousand pounds for Tryon's palace; and, this sum falling short of the needed total, the governor made up the deficit by a dexterous error in computing the balance on hand to the credit of the public school fund.

To build this palace (which for its day was a splendid provincial edifice) bricks and prepared material were brought from England, and one John Hawks, recorded as a Moor from Malta, was employed as its official architect. The building was completed in October of 1770; and the Latin inscription over its portal thenceforth looked serenely down upon the

taxpayers who had invited its sarcasm. This was what it said:

"Rege pio, dira inimica tyrannis
Vertuti has ædes libera terra dedit.
Sint domus et dominus sæclis exempla futuris
His artes, mores, jura legesque colant."

It was well that all the people could not read the language of ancient Rome; for had the words on Tryon's palace been translated into the king's English and been graven on the heart of every man whose hard-earned gold had gone to the building of that house, something unpleasant might have occurred. Translated, the inscription announced the following marvellous falsehood:

"A free and happy people, opposed to cruel tyrants, have given this edifice to virtue. May the house and its inmate, as an example for future ages, here cultivate the arts, order, justice and the laws."

After the people began to realize that a palace was a costly gift to such virtues as were represented by Tryon, they were also made to feel with redoubled weight the extortions and frauds of the provincial officers. In Orange county a number of citizens filed with the court a dignified and forcible protest against the current practice of inordinate feeing. This resulted in the convention held at Maddock's Mill in October, 1766, and at which resolutions were adopted condemning such illegal practices.

In the spring of 1768 the active spirits of the former convention met again and formed an association for the regulation of public grievances and abuse of power.

They resolved "to pay only such taxes as were agreeable to law and applied to the purpose therein named, and to pay no officer more than his legal fees." The fact that such a simple declaration was necessary proves the length to which these abuses had been carried. The formation of the Regulators with this avowed purpose was a bitter pill for Tryon, and for his favorite, whose unfailing procedure was to charge two or three or more fees for every official service, one fee to go to the public treasury, the others to their pockets.

Among these gentlemanly highwaymen was Edmund Fanning, who rose from poverty to affluence, from the ranks of the rabble of some other state to the position of a green bay tree flourishing in Tryon's favor; for he was clerk of the court of Orange, colonel of the county militia, an attorney-at-law, and representative (in a restricted sense) in the general assembly. In addition to these things, Fanning was the most polished robber of his age. He extorted fee upon fee; and the people? — "Make your complaints, gentlemen: Governor Tryon will consider them." Then, "Your Excellency, some seditious persons are misrepresenting me in a petition to your Excellency. But behold in me a man after your Excellency's own heart!" Whereupon would William the Wolf drop one eyelid by the fraction of an inch, and murmur, "Edmund dear, the people were made for us, not we for the people." And Fanning increased in wealth; and incidentally played fast and loose with a pretty — However, that comes further on.

In April of 1768 the people, greatly exasperated by the illegal acts of Fanning and the county sheriff, and

despairing of any result from appeals to the governor and to the crown, made something of a demonstration against these inexpressible gentlemen. The consequence was perfectly natural. The people had assumed rights; the government insisted that its officers' rights must come first; and Herman Husbands and James Hunter, two of the leaders, were arrested and given a comfortable place within the walls of the Hillsborough jail.

The Regulators, reasonably enough, were displeased at the law which made fish of one class and fowl of another; for they had appealed to the courts for relief from extortion and fraud and had met with rebuff upon rebuff, yet the first of them who dared to raise a hand against the commissioned thieves was made to suffer the penalty of the statutes. These men congregated in large numbers and started for Hillsborough for the purpose of freeing their imprisoned comrades. Hearing of this, Fanning and his confreres suddenly found it convenient to release the prisoners on bail.

A month later James Hunter and Rednap Howell, prominent Regulators, presented to the governor and his council a paper setting forth the people's grievances in simple, straightforward terms, and praying reasonable redress. The council, at Tryon's dictation, praised Fanning for his dignified and irreproachable course, and poured condemnation *ad nauseam* upon the Regulators for daring to consider the people possessed of such a devil as rights of citizenship.

This astonishing attitude gave increased popularity to the cause espoused by the Regulators. The

movement shaped itself into somewhat of an avalanche, and swept across the province, gaining weight and force as it went. It came to a stop near Hillsborough in July, 1768. By that time the rebels (to use Tryon's term of endearment) numbered thirty-seven hundred; but the governor mustered his army, and thus developed the fact that the Regulators were not looking for war. Their dispersal was effected without the shedding of blood.

Then the courts began to take a more active part. A large number of the "rioters" were lodged in jail, and were finally brought to trial. Hunter and several others were remanded to the prison, and Husbands was acquitted. William the Wolf, to whom an acquittal by a court meant little, refused to pardon Husbands and a dozen others, but took the stigma from the names of all the other participants in the movement of the Regulators.

In the spring of 1770 the beloved Maurice Moore, justice of the superior court, announced that the Rowan county people were so aroused against the constituted law that civil processes were impossible of execution among them. Similar conditions existed in other counties. The sheriff of Orange attempted the service of a warrant, and was seized by John Pugh, a famous woodsman, and by several other Regulators, and received a wholesome chastisement. In Dobbs county the sheriff was indiscreet enough to essay the capture of two Regulators, and was fortunate in escaping with his life — which, be it said, was more than holds true with his deputy. The superior court at Hillsborough was invaded by Husbands, Hunter, Howell, William

Butler, Samuel Divinny and others, who bundled up the lawyers and court officers, stood them up in the streets and thrashed them soundly. Judge Henderson, presiding over this body, came to the conclusion that an adjournment would be quite appropriate under the circumstances, and acted accordingly. More than this, the worthy judge, not liking the look of things, left the town in great precipitation some time during the night. The Regulators held this court *in suspenso* for a full year.

Fanning soon met a small portion of his just deserts at the hands of those whom he had wronged. He was taken from the court-house at Hillsborough, and his punishment was well under way when he took refuge in a store, closely followed by a shower of stones and brickbats. After this the enraged crowd tore down the colonel's house and demolished its furniture. The general public thought this no wrong, as all that Fanning had came by extortion from the people.

About this time the governor and his hirelings devoted themselves to securing evidence of the treason of these Regulators, and affidavits innumerable were taken to prove this. Among these was that of one Robert Lytle, who swore that he had seen the Regulators encamped, and drinking damnation to King George. This, of course, was reprehensible, and it was also ill-advised, for the damnation of King George was something rather beyond the scope of the good people whom Lytle visited.

In the last month of 1770 Tryon urged upon the assembly the necessity of having an increased army; for he saw that naught but blood could make

submission out of a chaos of ideas of liberty and of equitable representation.

Husbands was the assemblyman from Orange, but his patriotism became too conspicuous, and he was expelled, and afterward spent several days in jail as a reward for past demonstrations in the cause of liberty.

February of 1771 marked the appearance of a characteristic proclamation from Tryon, ordering that no one should sell powder, shot, or lead until William should permit. This was thought to be a measure which would drive the Regulators into the ways of peace, or to the use of bows and arrows. One merchant, however — But of that later.

A month afterward Tryon intercepted a letter written by Rednap Howell, and intended for James Hunter, concerning an attack upon New Bern, and the council at once provided for the raising of an army, to be headed by his Excellency, and to sweep the Regulators from the soil of North Carolina.

By this time the patriots were in arms, and were ready to meet Tryon should he seek for battle; but, be it remembered, their cry was ever, "Give us our rights, make your officers obey the written laws, and we will disperse in peace, and, as loyal subjects of his Majesty King George, will uphold the government."

And Tryon's unfailing answer was, "I cannot concede rights to rebels; the king's officers and my officers are honest and upright, never failing in their duty; and " — under his breath, of course — "hang it! you've got to fight, anyway!"

Men have asked, "Why did not the Regulators appeal to the courts for justice?" Well, they did.

They charged Fanning with extortion, and Fanning pleaded guilty (on Tryon's advice) to six indictments. Then were the people glad for a few moments; for they thought that justice had at last awakened in the land. Fanning, professedly guilty on six damning indictments! Yes; and Fanning was fined one penny on each count — sixpence for the bunched lot.

Much of conflicting tenor has been written concerning Herman Husbands. Beyond question the man was more than once involved in what the government was pleased to call rioting; but so were good men in all the colonies, and their descendants point to the fact with a just pride. The thorn in Tryon's side seemed to be, more than all else, Husbands' "seditious utterances"; for Husbands was the man who wrote the paper read to the court in Orange, the resolutions of the Maddock's Mill Convention, and every document of importance which came from the councils of the Regulators. On this account Husbands may have been a traitor; perhaps he was; but if so, he stood in good company, for then was Benjamin Franklin a traitor, and Patrick Henry, and Hancock, and Adams, and a thousand others. If these were traitors, then Husbands was a traitor; and they were the men who made free America.

Furthermore, governors like Tryon create a demand for men like Husbands and Howell and Hunter and their associates. Trampling upon human rights can have but one result: the rights will spring upward, and the right men with them, and will smite the trampler. And that is unpleasant for tyrants and for the friends of tyrants. At least, Tryon found it so.

CHAPTER VIII

"Call that Man a Frencher!"

IT was a cool day near the close of the first week in April of the year 1771. On the New Bern parade ground Governor Tryon, greatly puffed up with military vainglory, was holding a review of his Majesty's provincial troops of North Carolina. From miles around had come the people, all in holiday attire, and all ready to cheer for the king, for Tryon or for the army, whichever seemed the most timely; for cheers mean little on a gala day, and many who shouted for Tryon would as readily have cheered the devil. Their only aim was the making of a great noise. In this their success was amazing.

In one of the largest stores on Pollock street were congregated numerous men of many callings, dressed in the various garbs of the planter, the artisan and the woodsman. These were the people who, caring nothing for the vain pomp of the governor's review, had sought congenial companionship within the yellow-fronted shop of Simon Fawn.

The merchant behind the counter, obsequious and good-humored, seemed amply blessed with customers, although the greater part of the score or more men who lounged in his chairs and kicked their heels against his well-filled boxes, were not there for trading.

Fawn himself might have attracted attention in any crowd. He was a large, round-faced man, of ministerial look, with light blue eyes that shifted rather too much. He moved like one proud of his physical superiority, and bore that air of condescension so common among large men, giving him an appearance of good-fellowship and benevolence. This, naturally, did him immense credit with his friends and acquaintances. His manner was affable and cordial, his voice deep and cheery, and the expression of his face generally pleasing, barring the restlessness of his light eyes. This peculiarity, however, seldom attracted more than passing notice; for Simon Fawn's popularity and his sterling qualities were too patent to justify any man in saying that the look in his eyes was furtive and cunning.

During the first half hour of their meeting, the motley throng within the store conversed on general topics and in a general way; but later, when the air grew thick with tobacco smoke, and the customers ceased their coming (for the martial review was then at its height), they separated into little groups and talked together in subdued tones.

Two or three men sat aside from the rest and said but little. One of these, a portly, well-built man, in the simple garb of a Quaker, sat just inside the closed door, smoking a long-stemmed pipe and showing more than a casual interest in the snatches of conversation which came to his ears. This man, though past the prime of life, seemed the very incarnation of vigor. His large grey eyes shone with the boldness of an eagle's, and the height of his forehead and the

squareness of his lower jaw were accentuated rather than hidden by the curling masses of his vivid red hair and beard.

Close beside the Quaker, and upon apparently friendly terms with him, sat a man of similar build, attired in a plain suit of jeans and wearing a pair of stout, mud-spattered boots. Beneath the narrow-brimmed hat, which rested jauntily upon his head, fell a profusion of curly black hair. His large and vari-colored cravat was fastidiously arranged, and he wore a slip of holly on his coat lapel. Younger by several years than his companion, his manner was animated to a noticeable degree, and his eyes alternated with the glow of vigorous spirit and the sparkle of good humor.

A third man, tall and of muscular frame, stood leaning with his back to the counter. His fox-skin cap and brown hunting-suit would have proclaimed his vocation even had his long rifle not stood, with butt upon the floor, beside him.

"Stirring times, neighbor," remarked Fawn, moving to a place behind the hunter. "But how about the meat, friend Witten? Where is your venison?"

The woodsman shrugged his shoulders. "Sell me powder and lead, and I'll bring the meat," he answered, looking back and giving a short, mirthless laugh. "I can't catch deer with bird-lime."

"Persuade Governor Tryon to repeal his law, my friend, and you'll get your powder," said Fawn, smiling blandly. "We must be good citizens, Witten, peaceful and law-abiding."

"Yes," retorted the hunter, with a sneer, "peaceful

and law-abidin'! Our abidin' may be good enough, but the law's a damned outrage."

"'Sh! Witten, don't start such talk as that." Then, in lower tones, "the governor has big ears, you know."

Witten laughed loudly. "Every ass has got big ears," he said. "The gov'nor wouldn't look nat'ral without 'em."

A man lounged forward from the crowd. "Pretty good, friend," he said, addressing Witten; "but the Cherokees call the governor a better name than that. They say he's 'The Bloody Wolf'; and you may find he's got teeth as well as ears."

"The Injuns is wrong," was the bold retort. "A wolf is a wild dog as loves freedom. He don't wear no silver collars; it's yer city dogs as does that. King George owns a heap o' that breed, an' Gov'nor Tryon's the bigges' one in the lot."

"Wolf, dog, or whatever you please, for the governor," said a quiet-looking man, rising from his chair and coming forward; "but we're the asses, and will be so as long as we bear the burdens the king and his servants put upon us." He drew a bundle of printed pamphlets from his pocket. "Here friends," he said, handing them about the crowd, "take these sermons and read them. Then you'll see that what I say is true. Take one, Witten."

The hunter smiled as he shook his head. "Keep it, Pugh; I know the thing by heart — cover to cover. Don't believe me, eh? Well, here's yer text: 'Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was

pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.' "

The little knots of men had stopped their conversation, and the eyes of all were fixed upon Witten.

"That's the first text," continued the hunter, "an' the sermon goes to prove how Issachar stands for the people — us people — an' how civil slav'ry an' religious slav'ry is the two burdens. Ain't that what it says?" And he smiled triumphantly at Pugh.

"Who writ the thing?" called some one from the crowd.

"Some says Herman Husbands," answered Witten, "an' some says Ben. Franklin. They're two o' the same kind, anyhow — cousins by blood an' liberty-men by brains. If we had enough o' sich we wouldn't be no Issachars."

A dozen men stamped their feet in applause. Fawn gave an anxious look toward the door.

"Where's this 'ere Husbands now?" asked a farmer sitting astride an empty barrel. "Hidin' in a tree?"

"A long ways from here, I reckon," Witten answered. "He ain't runnin' his head into no gallus rope by comin' round these parts. Sence the gov'nor got him dumped out 'n th' assembly, he's made a clean pa'r o' heels, don't ye fergit that. The gov'nor's outlawed him, but the people's goin' to care fer Herman Husbands."

Once more the crowd answered with the thunder of heavy boot-heels.

"Can't the man take care of himself?" asked Fawn, with a forced laugh.

"SPEECH IS FREE," RETORTED THE WOODMAN, HIS VOICE LOUDER THAN BEFORE

Witten spun around on his heel. "Take care of himself!" he roared. "You bet he can; an' you bet he will, too. An' he can help us take care of ourselves, 'spite of the gov'nor an' all his gang o' thieves."

A great shout came up from the crowd.

Fawn, his face whitening, leaned over the counter and whispered into Witten's ear. "For Heaven's sake, be careful, man! The governor's troops could hear that yell."

"Speech is free," retorted the woodman, his voice louder than before. "If the gov'nor's chicken-hearted troops don't like what I say, they can come in an' string me up. It's comin' soon enough, anyhow." Then he turned to his audience. "I ain't no traitor," he said, "but," and he shook his great fist toward the governor's palace, "I want the squar' treatment, an' the law an' the jestice that the king's Lazarus-lickin' hound over yonder won't give us. That's what I want; an' that's what you want, too."

The din of applause drowned his voice. Witten held up his hand to command silence.

"If the gov'nor," he said, bending forward and looking his auditors in their faces; "if the gov'nor loved us people as much now as he said he did when he wanted money to build that 'ere palace o' his'n, he wouldn't have to raise no army to fight the Regulators. He made plenty o' promises an' talked mighty fine till he got all the money he wanted; an' after that, what did you git? Nothin'. That's what you got; an' that's all yer goin' to git. He's fixed now with all he wants, an' you can feed and clothe his lazy spen'thrift fav'rites and can't open your mouths to say nothin'. There's

where you stand. He don't care who sinks so long as he can swim. You gave him his palace; and now he wants you to give 'im a crown. He's holdin' his empty head now like he's born a king."

" 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall,' " sounded a deep voice from the front of the room.

All eyes were riveted on the speaker.

The Quaker sat quietly, smoking his pipe. After a moment he took the stem from between his teeth. "Pardon my interruption, friends; but if you think my quotation fits the case, remember it. Now, tell me one thing. Who are these Regulators?"

Pugh answered him. "I guess you're a stranger in these parts, sir. Where did you come from, not to know the Regulators?"

"I've come from Pennsylvania," answered the red-bearded man, quietly, "and my name is Jenkins. Candidly, I have heard something of the Regulators; but accounts differ so that I want the truth. Some have called them good and true men; others, rioters and disturbers of the peace. Who is right?"

A dozen men replied. The babel of eager shouts was louder than had been the repeated applause that greeted Witten's speech.

Fawn, coming from behind the counter, took the hunter by the arm and hurried him into the back room. "Witten," he said, excitedly, "there's danger in all this talk; you've got to stop it. Tryon suspects me now." He turned and took two packages from a book-case shelf. "You wanted powder and lead," he said, in a whisper. "There are both. It's a risk; and — keep

your money; but for Heaven's sake, go out and shut those people's mouths. They'll ruin me."

Witten dropped the ammunition into an inside pocket of his coat, and left the room.

After he had gone, a tall man, his features hidden by his slouched hat and by the upturned collar of his grey military cloak, looked up from the table at which he had been writing throughout the conversation between Witten and Fawn. "You gave Witten his powder," he said, with a smile; "but where's mine?"

"I'll have it ready to-night, Captain. Want it at the same place?"

"The same place; but don't send it, bring it."

"Certainly; if you'll meet me yourself. You can see, Captain, I can't risk getting a third party into this thing."

"As you will," answered the officer, curtly. "And at what hour?"

"Eleven, to-night."

"Very well," and he resumed his writing.

Fawn started toward the door.

"A moment more," called the other. "I wish to send this letter to Lord Durham, a guest of the governor. Can you work it for me?"

"Why — yes, yes. But here's a customer. Excuse me a moment, Captain." The store-keeper went into the front room, where quiet now reigned, and the door was carefully closed behind him.

The officer returned to his writing, but his eyebrows were drawn together with a frown.

Simon Fawn's customer was an Indian boy, about sixteen years of age. His dress was a ludicrous

combination of the fineries of barbarity and civilization. From the feathered cap on his head to the gayly beaded moccasins on his feet the boy was a human kaleidoscope; and buckskin leggings with red fringe upon them, a pair of sky-blue silk breeches, a shirt and waistcoat of the latest Parisian mode, a glaring yellow neck-scarf, and over all a red and green horse-blanket, were the things that went to the making up of the spectacle.

Fawn smiled broadly as the vision greeted his eyes. "What will you have, my boy?" he asked, bending over the counter.

"Me want spurs."

"Spurs? To be sure; I've got some beauties here, just the thing for you."

"No for me. Fit Caiheek — foot leetle."

After considerable parley, the purchase was made and the boy left the store.

"Who's yer gaudy friend, Fawn," asked the Man on the Barrel.

Witten responded. "Waits on the young Frencher at the gov'nor's."

"Bah!" growled the questioner, in disgust. "French and Injuns. Both our nat'ral-born enemies, an' both kissin' Tryon's feet."

"Oh! well," said Witten, oiling the rising waves, "let yer by-gones be by-gones. We fought the French an' Injun war once, an' we ain't goin' to fight it ag'in. The French is our friends; let 'em stay so."

Opportunely enough the door opened and a stranger entered. The room was silent as a tomb.

Simon was the first to speak. "Walk up, my friend,

walk up." Then, as the man approached him, "Let me see, Mr. — Your name has slipped my mind, but I've certainly met you before."

The new-comer, a short, thick-set man of thirty, looked puzzled. "I guess you have, if you say so," he answered; "but," with a little laugh, "I can't remember when nor how. My name is Ross — John Ross, from up the river."

The merchant's eyes dropped for a moment. "I'm Simon Fawn, as you can see by the sign over the door." He looked up again. "But I guess we've never met: I don't remember any Ross. But now, what can I do for you? Here's a big variety to choose from." And he waved his hand toward the heavily laden shelves along the wall.

"A little later," said Ross, smiling and walking back toward the door. "One of your guests is an old friend of mine. I must have a word with him first of all." He crossed to the curly-haired man with the holly on his coat. "Howell," he whispered, putting himself between the man and the crowd, "why are you parading yourself about the Carolinas. This is no place for you."

"Quiet, Ross," admonished the other. "Hunter and I are bearers of dispatches from the Regulators to Tryon. We want him to accept our terms and avert bloodshed."

"Will he do it?"

"No."

"Then, why do you and Hunter risk it?"

"We have to do our duty, that's why."

"But the danger?"

Howell lifted his eyebrows and laughed lightly. "Danger? It comes with our daily bread."

John turned away. "I'll see you to-night," he said.

"Yes — if all is well."

During their talk together, both perhaps thinking that Rednap Howell was a stranger to all save a few of those about them, the Man on the Barrel was humming a popular air in a soft undertone. As John returned to the counter some others in the crowd joined in the singing, and in a moment the room rang with the words of Howell's best song — for the curly-haired man was the poet-laureate of the simple patriots of the province.

> "Says Frohawk to Fanning, to tell the plain truth,
> When I came to this country, I was but a youth;
> My fath—"

"Neighbors, neighbors!" cried Fawn, in an agony of apprehension (the clamor had made the pans rattle on the shelves); "stop that noise. You'll bring the governor —"

"Damn the governor!" came the hot retort.

"Start over again," yelled another. "Fawn put us out of our time."

"Grind out the next verse," cried the Man on the Barrel.

> "Says Fanning to Frohawk, 'tis folly to lie,
> I rode an old mare that was blind of one eye;
> Five shillings—"

"Hold on, friends!" called Fawn. "Here comes a customer."

"The Frenchman from the palace," muttered some one.

"Shut up! while Simon bleeds him," laughed the Man on the Barrel.

The door opened and the young Parisian entered. The eyes that sought him curiously at first began soon to exhibit undoubted admiration. For the Frenchman, although apparently not more than a score of years in age, was tall above the common, and carried the shoulders of an Olympian athlete, and upon them a head held high as became one of his station, with a face strong in feature and high-bred in its every expression. Such was Motier Du Val, the friend of Governor Tryon.

He walked to the counter.

Fawn met him with his characteristic smile. "Can I do something for you, sir?" he asked.

"This is Mr. Fawn?" was the questioning response, in a voice that had but a slight suggestion of foreign accent.

"That's my name, sir; at your service."

"My Indian servant made a purchase of you a short time ago, did he not?"

"Yes, indeed, sir. I waited on him very gladly. A pair of spurs, sir. I hope they suited you."

"Perfectly. But the boy picked up this knife somewhere — he thinks here — and wished me to return it. I would have asked him to bring it to you, but fearing he might find difficulty in expressing himself clearly, I preferred to make the restitution myself."

Fawn took the knife. "It is my penknife, sir," he

said. "Much obliged, very much obliged, sir! Perfectly natural on the boy's part. No ill-will, sir — none whatever. People put things into their pockets without thinking — fingering and fumbling from mere habit. I do it myself, sometimes. He's an honest fellow to restore it: few Indians would do it."

Du Val had been regarding the merchant with an amused and tolerant smile. "I will tell him of your good opinion, Mr. Fawn," he said, when Simon had finished his rambling dissertation. "He will doubtless appreciate it."

"I hope so, sir; I hope so. Anything else, sir. Some fine gloves, just in from England. Let me show them to you, sir."

"No, no, not to-day. But — have you a small memorandum book, something to fit the waistcoat pocket?"

"The very thing, sir. Excuse me for a moment; they're in my counting-room, to the rear."

Du Val's eyes followed the bulky form of the merchant as it disappeared through the glazed doorway. While he still looked he caught a glimpse of the features of him whom Fawn had addressed as "Captain." The face, with its piercing eyes and firm-set lips, compelled the young man's notice, and it stamped itself indelibly upon his memory.

When Simon Fawn returned he brought several note books and, moreover, two large envelopes, one addressed in the handwriting of the officer in the counting-room, the other in Simon's own rude scrawl.

"You are a guest of the governor, are you not?" he asked, after Du Val had selected his book.

"I am," was the answer.

"Then, will you kindly hand this note," holding out the officer's missive, "to Lord Durham, very privately; and this one," giving him the envelope bearing his own writing, "to Governor Tryon?"

"Certainly, sir," answered Du Val, as he held the letters in his hand for a moment.

Suddenly a crash shook the air like a thunder-clap. The men in the store started nervously, and the merchant's wares rattled and jumped in their places. Du Val alone had not stirred by as much as the movement of an eyelid.

"Who shot the cannon?" asked Rednap Howell.

"'Squire Cantwell's boat, the *Leopard,*" answered John Ross. "She rounded the bend as I came down the street."

"'Squire's too fond of salutin'," muttered Witten. "Burns good powder fer nothin'."

The Frechman, smiling a little, dropped the two letters into separate pockets. "Good day, sir," he said, courteously. The floor trembled under the heavy tread of his feet.

The Man on the Barrel was the first to speak. "Call that man a Frencher!" he said, with dry sarcasm.

"French enough," retorted Pugh. "He and his father came up from Charleston. They landed there fresh from France."

"France or no France," returned the first speaker. "There ain't no frog-eatin' blood in him."

"Powerful lookin' feller," commented Witten.

"Powerful! Wal, I reckon so! Arms and legs as big as my waist."

"Nervy, too."

"Nervy! Did you see 'im when that 'ere cannon went off? He never twitched a muscle. He ain't no Frencher!" And the Man on the Barrel spat upon the floor with his disgust at the idea.

Suddenly from without came the sound of shouting, rising in a wild crescendo. Witten rushed to the door and thrust out his head. The din of the tumult swept in with the wind. The crowd in the store ran toward the street.

"A fight! A fight!" yelled the Man who had been on the Barrel.

And Simon Fawn was left alone in his store.

CHAPTER IX

A Knightly Deed and a Forewarning

MOTIER DU VAL, after leaving the store of Simon Fawn, walked leisurely toward the palace.

The military review had ended, and the militiamen in broken ranks were going from the field. A shimmering cloud of dust hanging above the avenue to the palace gave evidence that the governor and his suite were homeward bound.

The decorated review stand and the public bench-rows were slowly yielding up their crowds of spectators, when a long wavering line, like a great, dark caterpillar, wound slowly up the path, and the sailors and immigrants from the *Leopard* came up from the vessel's wharf. A straggling, motley crowd it was. Rough, sunburned sailors, with the roll of the sea still in their legs; strange looking women whose figures and faces were as uncouth and as unwomanlike as the men's; children with the look of youth pinched from their faces; these were they who had come across the sea in 'Squire Cantwell's ship.

The people in the review stand saw the strangers and gave greeting with a ripple of good-humored laughter. This was pardonable because irresistible; but the people of the lower classes and the young men

and boys, who were nearest to the ship's outpouring, went a point too far; and surrounding the little party began a fusilade of boisterous shouts and offensive epithets. This was the sound which had emptied Simon's store.

The ship's people might have crossed the parade ground without interference had not the attention of these riotous bystanders been drawn to one person, whose appearance was grotesque even in that rude procession. This was a woman of bulky and masculine figure, swaying from side to side as she walked, and seeming to move with unbended knees. This gait was due, perhaps, to the stiffness of the great, high boots which encumbered her, and which showed conspicuously below her short petticoat. A faded blue sun-bonnet, with loosened strings, was thrown back from her face, showing her strongly marked and red-tinged features. Under one arm she carried a bundle of clothing; and upon her other shoulder rested a long broom with a string of tin cups and pans pendant from it.

A crowd of boys pressed about her. "A witch! A witch!" they shouted gleefully. "Duck her in the pond!"

The woman raised her eyes. "Out o' my way, boys. Let me pass by yez," she said, good-naturedly.

"Ride on your broom," called one of the crowd.

"Yes, witch, ride your broom!" sounded the chorus.

One great hulking fellow came through the herd. "Ride your broom, woman," he said, with an oath. "Ride it, or we'll soak you in the ditch!"

She looked about nervously. Her party, unmindful of her absence, was half way across the field. "Let me pass," she said, hoarsely. "This ain't no way to treat a woman."

"Ho! Hear the old fool!" guffawed the big fellow. "Give her a dose of witch's medicine, boys!"

"Go ahead, Cantwell!" answered the rabble. "We're with you!"

Picking a half brick from the ground Jake Cantwell hurled it at the woman. It grazed the back of her head, knocked off her bonnet, and was caught by some one on the opposite side of the circle. The woman, pale and trembling, stood looking at her persecutors, her eyes pleading for pity and her thin grey hair waving about in the cold breeze.

With a laugh Cantwell made a move toward her, holding a stout stick in his uplifted hand. "Move along, you hag!" he yelled.

She turned toward him; and, dropping her bundle and the broom with its rattling burden, held up her hands to shield her face.

Drawing back the cudgel Cantwell aimed a blow at her head. A hand caught his wrist from behind.

"Let her alone, you brute," said a deep voice, close to his ear.

Cantwell, without turning, tried to break from the stranger's grip. His arm was forced back until it seemed parting from the shoulder.

With a cry of pain he dropped the club and swung about. He met the piercing eyes of Motier Du Val, and made a quick step backward. A yell of applause came from the people in the stands, fifty yards away.

Cantwell turned pale with rage. "Let go my arm!" he shouted. "Let go, I say!"

"You'll leave the woman alone?"

"No, you fool, I won't!"

The crowd of boys laughed in derision.

Du Val's eyes flashed dangerously. "Coward!" he said, contemptuously. "Lay your hands on her again and you'll regret it." He released Cantwell's wrist and started toward the woman.

With a muttered curse the big fellow struck at the Frenchman with his heavy fist. The women in the review-stand gave a little scream. The blow grazed Du Val's shoulder.

The mob rushed in to Cantwell's aid. Du Val turned quickly; his clenched hand, backed by his powerful arm, broke through the ruffian's guard as through a pair of straws, caught the man full in the chest, lifted him off his feet and hurled him prostrate to the ground. A great shout came from the stands.

"Roarin' frogs!" yelled a voice on the outskirts of the crowd. "That feller a Frencher!" And the Man who had sat on the Barrel in Simon's store dropped the two bricks which he had brought to Du Val's aid. "He don't need no help from me," he said, with a quiet laugh. "He's a reg'lar ox-killer."

Du Val stood for a moment looking down at his helpless adversary. The crowd of men and boys rushed toward him. He looked up at them. They hesitated a moment. One man closed in and struck at him. Du Val drove his fist straight into the fellow's face. The man went down without a sound. Another

exultant shout rang across the field. The rabble surged back. The Frenchman made a quick move toward them; they broke and scurried off like a pack of mongrel curs.

With contempt in every line of his face Du Val, without a word, turned his back to his foes and crossed to where the old woman, in open-mouthed astonishment, viewed the scene. A rough-looking sailor, with black eyes and grizzled side-whiskers, stood beside her.

"You will have no further trouble, my good woman," said Du Val, touching his hat. "But move along quickly."

"Thank you, young master," answered the woman, with tears in her eyes. "You saved my life that time. I'll see you ag'in some day; an' you'll find it's not old Peggy McFaddin as fergits a favor. She may pay it back better'n you think. Good bye to you, sir; an' God bless you!"

"You've got my thanks, too," said the sailor, with an awkward bow. "I runned back here to help you, but durn me if you didn't lick the hull gang." And the pair crossed the parade ground and passed from view.

Du Val, brushing some dust from his coat-sleeve, walked slowly toward the palace.

Near the middle of the flag-draped review stand a party of perhaps a dozen people stood, watching with interest the outcome of the conflict. These were a part of Governor Tryon's social following, and among them were the handsomest women and the ablest men in the whole province.

As Du Val walked across the parade ground, this little knot of spectators broke into a storm of plaudits.

"Think! That quiet Du Val!" exclaimed one.

"I thought they'd kill him," said a pretty light-haired girl.

"He evidently had no fears," laughed another.

"Your friend has a cool head, Miss Wake," said a young officer to Lady Tryon's sister.

"Indeed he has," was the laughing response. "And a strong arm, too." Then, leaning toward a handsome woman with dark eyes and white hair, "You have never met Monsieur Du Val, Mrs. DeVere?"

"No," answered the other, with a smile. "Have you, Alice?" she asked of the light-haired girl.

"I wish that I might," responded the girl, with a pretty shrug of the shoulders.

A tall, shapely woman, dark-haired and dark-eyed, looked down at Alice. "You shall, Miss De Vere, if I bring him to you myself."

Miss De Vere laughed musically. "Really, Miss Creighton, you must. I like his chivalry, don't you?"

The handsome woman's eyes softened as they looked from beneath their long lashes. "He'd fight no sooner for a queen than he did for that poor woman."

Mrs. De Vere gave a little cry. "He's in trouble again," she said, pointing to the far side of the field.

Her companions, already moving toward the gateway, stopped and looked after Du Val.

He was standing, facing those who followed him. The crowd of men and boys had returned, and with them was a short, fat man dressed in black.

"Who is that man?" asked Miss Wake.

"Graball, the constable," answered the man at her side.

Miss Creighton was bending forward, her eyes looking eagerly toward the knot of men across the field. "They are arresting him," she exclaimed, in a strained voice.

"Where is young Cantwell?" asked Miss De Vere. "He was the one at fault."

"A mile away by this time," answered Miss Wake's escort. "He hardly cares to meet that sledge-hammer again."

"There's something queer and underhanded in all this," said the governor's sister-in-law, under her breath. "Take me to the palace, Mr. Macdonald; I must see Governor Tryon."

"Take my carriage, Esther," said Mrs. De Vere. "I'll go out to Beechwood with Mr. De Vere and Lord Durham. But you must hurry."

So Esther Wake and Macdonald, with Miss Creighton entered the De Vere carriage, and were driven rapidly toward the palace. On the other side of the parade ground Du Val and the sheriff walked slowly down toward Pollock street, talking and laughing with one another, greatly to the wonderment of the crowd, whose tastes would have been suited far better had the Frenchman shown fight and been clubbed into insensibility. But, nevertheless, Du Val was in the hands of the law.

The last people to leave the field were those who had come from Fawn's store. They walked slowly across the level green, listening to the enthusiastic account of the Man who had sat on the Barrel. "Here's

where it happened," he was saying, "right here where you see the other feller's club. When he hit that feller Cantwell, he punched 'im out to here — a clean four yards; an' when he caught Jim Smedley in the teeth he dropped 'im, sittin'-down-ways, over yonder, Call that feller a Frencher! Swimmin' snakes! He's North Carolina to his toe-nails — France or no France!"

With a quick exclamation Jenkins, the Quaker, stooped and picked up a paper which, rumpled and dirty, lay on the ground. He called Howell to his side. "Open it, Rednap," he said, handing it to him.

"It's addressed to the governor," said Howell, a little stupidly.

"So much the better. Open it."

Their companions had gone ahead. Howell tore open the envelope. The two men bent over the slip of paper which fell out. "I can furnish your Excellency. Send to-night about ten." This was all that it said, and the signature was, "S. Fawn."

The Quaker gave a low whistle. "We have read of Simon the Pharisee," he said, with a chuckle. "This is Simon the Hypocrite. Tell Ross as soon as you can. 'Forewarned, forearmed,' you know."

"But what does it mean? What can he furnish his 'Excellency'?"

"To-night at ten we shall see," was the quiet response.

CHAPTER X

The Governor Does Some Plotting

OVERNOR TRYON and his suite had arrived at the palace and were gathered in the Grand Hall of Audience. The governor, resplendent in the uniform of captain-general, beamed complacently upon the officers gathered about him.

"Your infantry is greatly improved, Colonel Leach," he said, turning to the one at his right. Then smiling to the left, "And your artillery, Captain Moore, is not a whit less deserving of praise. I count upon you both to do his Majesty the good service which my knowledge of you leads me to expect."

The officers briefly expressed their gratification. It took no second glance at their faces to see that they were men whose lives were bound up in their duty.

"I hope your Excellency has not been altogether dissatisfied with my Rangers," said a younger officer, advancing toward the governor.

"By no means, Captain Neale. I beg your pardon, if I appeared to forget you. But the parade ground is not the place to develop your good qualities. It will take the field itself to test your efficiency; for the Rangers will need more knowledge of woodcraft than of tactics. The Regulators will hardly meet us in close

formation; instead, they will fight from bushes and from behind trees. In case of ambuscade, it is principally upon you, Captain Neale, and upon your gallant Rangers that I shall rely. From my inspection of your company to-day, I do not fear disappointment. Indeed, gentlemen all, I shall take care that his Majesty be duly informed of your devotion; and I promise that your faithful services shall not go unrewarded. But, I am detaining you. Send in your requisitions early; for in a week or two, at most, we must be ready to march against these rebels." And with a gracious wave of the hand, he dismissed them.

The governor, smiling to himself, crossed the room and took his place in the executive chair. There he sat for several minutes, and as he sat, the smile slowly faded from his eyes. He was thinking deeply, and the frown which formed the wrinkles between his shaggy brows showed that his thoughts were not pleasant.

While he still sat there, his chin resting upon his gauntleted right hand, and his eyes fixed upon the floor, a door half way down the side of the room opened, and Esther Wake, her cheeks flushed and her eyes flashing, entered the hall.

The governor, shaking off the cloud of his gloom, arose and removed his plumed hat. "Toujours la bien-venue! ma chère soeur!—as our friend, the senior Du Val, would say. Take the place at the right of the throne, Esther; for I am truly glad to see you." The captain-general, taking her hand, led her to the chair beside his own. "Now, what is it, my

prime minister?" he asked, cheerfully, as he resumed his seat. "What brings you here when the tea-cups are rattling in my lady's boudoir?"

"Trouble, trouble, your Excellency."

"'Your Excellency,' indeed!" he said, with fine scorn. "Why place a title between us two? Why art so formal, fair one?"

She smiled as she half turned toward him. "Why?" she repeated, softly, resting her elbows on the chair arm and looking into his eyes over her clasped hands. "Because, your Excellency, I am here as a loyal subject of his Majesty the king, pleading for justice for our junior visitor from the land of Louis XV."

"Motier? What of him?"

"Your Excellency, our protege, crossing the parade ground after the review, found a great brute of a youth — one Jacob Cantwell, your Excellency — throwing stones at, and otherwise abusing, a poor old woman who had landed from the *Leopard* but a few moments before. This Cantwell, your Excellency, was about to strike the woman with a stick when our friend Motier interfered. This Cantwell, your Excellency, struck at Motier and Motier knocked him down. Then another man tried to strike our friend and met the same fate. This Cantwell, your Excellency, escaped; while Motier left the field in the hands of that horrid Graball, the constable." She paused a moment in her speech.

The governor smiled. "'And this Cantwell, your Excellency,'" he mimicked, "this Cantwell is a son of good 'Squire Cantwell?"

She nodded, and a quick gleam came into her eyes.

"Yes," she answered, slowly, "of — good — 'Squire — Cant — well."

The captain-general laughed. "You do not love the man."

Esther gave a shudder. "Ugh!" she exclaimed, drawing down the corners of her pretty mouth. "When he is near I feel as though I had put my hand upon a corpse in the dark."

"Horrible figure of speech, Esther — horrible!"

"So is the man, your Excellency." Then imitating his deep tones, "Horrible man, William — horrible!"

The governor crossed his knees and laughed loud and long.

Esther reached out one hand and laid it upon his gold-braided sleeve. "But my justice, your Excellency, where is my justice?"

"Your justice, Queen Esther? But, what do the Scriptures say about it? I think it is, "Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.' Isn't that the writ?"

Esther laughed, and a little flush came to her cheeks. "'And Esther answered,'" she quoted, "'If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.'"

The captain-general rose to his feet. "Be it so, Esther," he said, with a gleam of kindly humor in his eyes. "Prepare your feast if you will, and Motier and I will tea with you before the end of the hour. Have I met the situation?"

"Like blindfolded Justice herself, your Excellency. And now I must go to make ready my banquet."

"Come first to the window where we can see our view, while I ask a question."

They crossed to one of the deep-seated windows. "You have a woman's keen eye, Esther. Is there disaffection in the camp?" He looked closely at her.

She shook her head. "I have seen none, brother. Why do you ask?"

"Treachery, black treachery, little woman. My guards, soon after the review, seized a man named Witten. He was laden down with powder and lead. Where did he get it? From Fawn?"

Again she shook her head. "Perhaps; but I cannot think so. Simon Fawn's aim is gold. It is more to his good to please than to antagonize you. It is to his interest to be loyal; and the insurgents, you know, cannot outbid you; they are too poor."

"Wisely reasoned, my councillor. You have added greatly to my debt. And now —"

"I must go, William, I — How splendid you look in your uniform. Can't you wear it always?"

"Go on, child," he said laughing, as he felt the blood rise to his cheeks. "You'll make me vain —"

"Vainer, your Excellency, vainer!" And, laughing, she went from the hall, leaving the governor smiling out of the window and whistling softly to himself.

Several minutes later a knock sounded on the door, and a liveried attendant entered. "A note from Lord Durham," he said.

The governor, waiting until the door was closed, returned again to his seat at the end of the hall, opening the letter as he walked. There were two enclosures. The one from Lord Durham read, "My servant has

just brought me the enclosed letter addressed to your Excellency, evidently given to him by mistake. Durham."

Sitting down and replacing his hat, the governor opened the other envelope, and smiled as he read the message which it had contained; for it was the letter from Simon Fawn, which, falling from Du Val's pocket, had been picked up and read by Howell and the Quaker. The missive was the same, but the envelope was another, addressed by a different hand. This, however, the governor did not notice.

Had he known that Rednap Howell's pen had traced that flourished superscription, his Excellency would have changed his plans. As it was, he only slipped the note beneath his belt and muttered, "Esther was right. Fawn is to be trusted."

He touched a bell. The liveried attendant came to his elbow. "Ask my secretary to summon the council at once, to meet me here when they are together."

The governor turned to his table and began writing. After a moment he looked up. The wondrously attired Indian boy stood before him.

"When did you come, Tonta? and what do you want?"

"Want soldier bring Caiheek," was the answer.

"Caiheek? You mean your young master?"

Tonta drew himself up proudly. "No master," he said, quickly. "Tonta got no master. Him Caiheek — in jail."

"I've heard of this. He will be set free. You may go."

And Tonta went, but not whither the governor

thought; for, with a quick glance about him, he slipped into the private study of the executive, a small room adjoining the Hall of Audience and connected with it by a door.

Governor Tryon resumed his writing. He had finished, and was drying the ink upon the sheet when the door opened.

"Mr. Cantwell," announced the servant.

The governor looked up and nodded.

Cantwell, scrupulously dressed in black and bearing his hat in his hand, entered the hall.

"You are prompt, Mr. Cantwell," remarked the governor, leaning back in his chair.

Cantwell bowed profoundly. "I am always ready to serve your Excellency," he said.

"I thank you," was the governor's dry response. "I have never doubted you. I only fear, Mr. Cantwell, that at times you may be over-zealous in your duty."

The justice looked up in surprise. "But your Excellency would find no fault with that."

"I am not so sure of that, Mr. Cantwell. For instance," and the governor bent forward, smiling grimly, "you have caused, only to-day, a gentleman who has come to me from the court of Louis XV to be arrested by a common constable. He is a representative of a foreign power and is an honored guest of mine. Was that a kindly service? Was that a discreet act, Mr. Cantwell?"

The 'Squire's eyes fell. "I am sorry," he stammered, "that I did not know this a few hours earlier. Your Excellency's orders were imperative. The civil authorities were to co-operate with the military in

preserving order. This young man was clearly guilty of an affray."

"Doubtless. And you have committed him?" The governor's smile was far from being a pleasant one.

"For want of bail, your Excellency, which he would not even try to procure. He's as proud as —"

"As any Frenchman," interrupted the governor. "Although our hereditary foes, and of late at war with us, we must concede to the French a delicate sense of honor. Besides, a stranger, unknown even to the well-informed 'Squire Cantwell, might find it difficult to secure a bondsman under such circumstances. It is, indeed, a matter for the French government to adjust," he added carelessly. "It may come to that yet. But," and his smile deepened, "there must needs be two parties to an affray. Of course, you committed the other, also."

"He escaped, your Excellency."

"Ah! That was unfortunate. Your zeal should have found him. And who was he?"

"He — he was — hum —"

"Never mind, Mr. Cantwell," the governor said, sharply. "I know who it was."

The door again opened, and in thunderous tones came the announcement, "Mr. Rednap Howell and Captain James Hunter."

"Show them into the anteroom," commanded the governor; "and let them wait until I ring." Then to Cantwell, in tones of confidence that completely reassured the discomfited magistrate, "This, my good 'Squire, is a deputation from the Regulators; they bring, as their note this morning informed me,

proposals for an amicable adjustment of our difficulties. They are bold rascals, to come to me at such a time on such an errand. I almost feel that my duty is to detain them. *Nous verrons!* The interview will be brief. I wish you to remain, but not in sight. There is a room into which you can retire until they are gone. We can then finish our business, which, in good truth, has been already too long delayed."

Following the direction of the governor's finger Cantwell entered the same chamber which harbored Tonta, who stood now behind a friendly curtain. The door having been closed upon the 'Squire's entrance, the Indian could not hear the words which passed between the governor and the committeemen; for the good 'Squire had placed himself at the keyhole. However, there was little to hear, for the proposals were to go before the council, and the governor's part was intermediary. The executive's manner, notwithstanding, was overbearing and threatening. It required no decision of the council to show the futility of all conciliatory efforts; and it is probable that the two Regulators arrived at that conclusion long before they left.

When Cantwell returned to the hall, he saw that his Excellency's face was still flushed with anger. "The impertinence of those fellows!" he exclaimed, hotly. "Think, my good Cantwell, of their demanding passports to protect them on their way home in case of the rejection of their precious proposals. Passports! Think of it! Passports for damned rebels! And they appealed to my honor, claiming the rights of belligerents! Malefactors, the whole of them; and

these are their ringleaders! I told them their security depended upon themselves, and that the slightest demonstration would commit them. I have taken the liberty of sending them to you for lodging, 'Squire. I beg you to watch them closely. And, also, as you have Witten a prisoner, see if you can extort a confession from him implicating them. It would be extremely convenient at this time."

Cantwell fumbled with the lining of his hat. "Witten is not a prisoner, your Excellency," he said, after an embarrassed pause.

"He is not!" thundered the governor. "You surely have not let him go!"

"He escaped, I grieve to say; or, rather, he was rescued. A man mounted on a black horse, apparently a passer-by who had attracted no suspicion, dashed up suddenly and carried off the prisoner while the guard was taking him to jail."

"The devil!" growled the governor, testily. "And did they not fire upon him?"

"Yes; but too late to do any good."

"The guard must account to me to-night." The governor began pacing up and down the floor. "Who was this horseman?" he asked, sharply.

"No one recognized him. He wore a slouched hat and appeared to be disguised."

"Strange, very strange! Why was this not reported to me?"

"It occurred just before I came in, your Excellency. I have had no official notice of it."

"Very well; let it pass for the present. Now, 'Squire, we understand each other, I think. I shall

expect Monsieur Du Val's immediate release. Good day, sir." And, with something like contempt in his eyes, he watched Cantwell's hurried departure.

Simon Fawn must have been waiting at the door, for he entered unannounced as Cantwell passed out.

"You are playing a bold game, Mr. Fawn," said the governor, as the merchant came before him. "It may go beyond you. Are you sure Maynard has no suspicions."

"Very sure, your Excellency," responded Fawn, with his pompous smile. "I have done the captain many favors; and the Regulators, you know, claim me as a secret friend. They bring me trade, and naturally I treat them politely."

"And take a lion's share of their money," remarked the governor, with sarcasm.

"I must live, you know. Must live, your Excellency."

"You work, then, for money, Mr. Fawn?"

"Not alone, your Excellency. I would serve his Majesty from loyalty alone; but if I can find a little more in it, why, so much the better."

"Well, my dear sir, in your present enterprise you have both motives — loyalty and interest. Because of his part in the Whitechurst murder, for Captain Maynard, dead or alive, there stands a reward of one hundred pounds; as for Herman Husbands, if you can take him — and his capture will be quite as difficult as the other — you must be satisfied with the gracious approbation of the king, which, after all, may be worth more to you than the other. You say the appointment is at eleven to-night, and that you are to go alone? How will you carry the ammunition?"

"In a cart."

"What!" The governor leaned forward, deeply interested. "So large a quantity as that? And you are paid in advance?"

"No, your Excellency. Captain Maynard would have suspected me had I asked that. But if your Excellency can so plan that I will have time to receive the money before Maynard's capture, it would secure me financially and would cost you nothing."

Tryon laughed quietly. "The hundred pounds sterling is not enough, then? No matter. As you say, it will cost us nothing, and would add that much to the enemy's disbursements. I will send you a corporal and twenty men, to be posted in the woods as you may direct. At some signal, which you and the officer may adopt, the men can seize Maynard and such others as may be with him."

"One thing, particularly, your Excellency. I want the corporal to capture me also, to mislead Maynard and to clear me of suspicion. Otherwise our success might come back to my detriment."

"You are deep, my good sir. Let it be as you will. The corporal will report to you between ten and eleven. Make your own arrangements. But take them all; do not let a man escape. Now, one question more: does Maynard wear a slouched hat?"

"He does, sir."

"And he rides a black horse?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

"Hm!" he muttered, to himself. Then, rising, "That is all now. If you succeed — and you have the game in your own hands — I myself will add

something to your reward. Such patriotism as yours deserves encouragement. Good afternoon; and — be cautious!"

Simon went out, his face wreathed in smiles.

After Fawn's departure a messenger brought word to the executive that the council waited in the anteroom. He summoned them to the Hall of Audience, and there secured their sanction for the carrying out of a multitude of his plans.

A short time after the council had left, Motier Du Val, who had been liberated by the apologetic 'Squire Cantwell, entered the hall.

"Ah!" exclaimed the governor, rising and advancing to meet him. "Mon jeune ami! On vous a fait mal, n'est ce pas? et j'en suis bien fâché. But come: we will discuss that later. Les dames nous attendant. We must not keep the ladies waiting, mon cher Motier. Allons!" Without waiting for Du Val's reply, the governor, heartily tired of official duties, led the way to the parlor and to Esther's promised feast.

No sooner was the hall vacant than Tonta emerged stealthily from the governor's study. "Take him Cap'n Maynie!" he said, with flashing eyes. "Take bobbasheela! Tonta see!" And slipping through a half-opened window at the far end of the hall, he darted across the lawn and was lost to view amid the shrubbery.

For Captain Maynard's life hung by a single thread, and that thread was what the Indian had heard when Fawn and the governor talked together in the Grand Hall of Audience.

CHAPTER XI

Conscience and a Failure

SIMON FAWN, alone in his counting-room on Pollock Street, sat waiting. It was early in the night; the clock's stroke of nine still rang in his ears; and the corporal's guard was not to come until half-past ten. Yet Fawn, nervous and anxious, was waiting, as he knew that he must wait through the ninety long minutes that stretched before him like the years that have no end.

A wax candle burned on the mantel close by the Swiss clock which ticked loudly in the silence. But the light was bad, thought Simon, and he snuffed it. The improvement seemed so slight that he lit another candle and placed it on the opposite end of the shelf.

"Now," he muttered, "the room will be brighter."

Vain imagining! The gloom was in Simon's heart, where the light of candles could not shine.

He sat down before the open fire (the night was damp and chilly), and bending forward with elbows upon his knees, he gazed musingly into the glowing coals. His smoothly-shaven chin rested in his hands, and for once his light eyes ceased their restless shifting. The candle beams fell upon his grey head, and the fire's fitful blazing cast queer lights and shadows across his troubled face.

Strange things did Simon see in that fire, visions such as come to some men when, hopeless, they sit in the darkness of the shadow of death. For he had betrayed a man whose confidence was his; and treachery goes hand in hand with murder, so that no man can tell when the one will come to be the other.

In his bitterness of spirit Fawn grasped at the straw that ever floats within the reach of the betrayer and the assassin. "I am right," he whispered to himself, "for I serve the king against his enemies. Who has better cause?" But the words stuck in his throat, for Maynard's face seemed to look at him from the fire, and Maynard's eyes, dark and reproachful, glowed in the flickering coals.

With a hard-flung oath Simon rose to his feet and kicked the fire savagely with his boot. Then, standing with his back to the grate, he looked about the room.

"Pshaw!" he said, finally. "I'm a child, scared at a dream. I risk my reputation, perhaps my life, probably Maynard's esteem; but what are these! Nothing, as it now stands. I've hedged my way, disclosures are impossible, and I'll have the hundred pounds and 'the gracious approbation of the king.'" With a smile and a shrug of the shoulders he crossed to his book-case. Pushing aside the crimson curtain he reached within; there was a tinkle of glass against glass; he turned back, and in one hand glistened a frail, thin-stemmed wine-glass, while in the other rested a bottle, dark and dusty.

He walked back to the mantel, the floor creaking beneath his weight. Setting the glass in the centre of the shelf he drew the cork from the bottle. With a

low chuckle he rested the cob-webbed neck upon the glass's crystal brim.

But the light was still bad. He raised the bottle a moment, and with his left hand placed the candles close together, one to the right, the other to the left of the little glass. The light shone strongly upon his face, gleaming on the low, unfurrowed forehead; throwing the shadow of his long, sharp nose across the skin of his flaccid cheek; and playing with ruthless brightness about the loosely-cut lines of his weak, smiling mouth. Again resting the bottle on the edge of the glass, he tipped it upward. With a low, hesitant gurgle the red wine began to pour. The little stream sparkled down the inside of the glass and the blood-red tide rose slowly toward the top; a final stifled gurgle, and the wine, sparkling like a monarch's ruby, stirred in a shallowing whirlpool beneath the light of the candles.

With a grunt of satisfaction Fawn pushed in the cork and stood the bottle on the shelf. Then, taking the glass in his hand he held it between the light and his eyes. "Fairer than the sard-stone of Babylon!" he said, slowly, turning the stem between his fingers. "Brighter than a woman's eyes!"

He raised the glass higher. "In the king's service!" he said, gayly; for the man was drunk with his own thoughts. "All is well when done for the king. The king's vintage! To the health of the king! Long live the — "

The words froze upon his lips.

A thundering rap sounded on the door. The glass fell from Simon's hand and was shattered on the hearth. The untasted wine, like a ruddy serpent,

THE GLASS FELL FROM SIMON'S HAND AND WAS SHATTERED ON THE HEARTH.

writhed across the stone. Trembling, white, his eyes staring with sudden terror, Fawn stood in the light of the flickering candles, his shaking hand still uplifted, the pallor of death upon his parted lips.

Again came the deafening knock.

Simon started toward the door. His knees gave way beneath him, and he sank into his chair. "Come in," he cried, hoarsely.

The door swung open, and Cantwell crossed the threshold.

Fawn sighed with a great relief.

"What's up, my friend?" asked Cantwell, sharply. "Sick?"

"Rather," was the hesitating response.

The 'Squire crossed to the fire, drawing off his gloves as he went. His keen eyes fell upon the fragments of the glass and the little stream of wine that, smoking with the heat, gleamed upon the hearth-stone. A sudden smile crossed his face.

"Aha! my boy," he said, with a ring of satire in his voice. "Gone to the bottle, eh! Remember, Simon, that Solomon, a far wiser man than Fawn, once said, 'Look not upon the wine when it is red.'"

Simon looked up helplessly. "It was the only glass, John," he said. "I was seized with a vertigo and dropped it in the pouring."

Cantwell's eyes gleamed with mockery. "Dropped the glass, yet placed the bottle carefully on the shelf! Tut! tut! Simon! That is child's talk."

Fawn groaned. "I cannot explain it, John," he said, weakly, "everything was black before me."

Cantwell, slapping his boot-top with his gloves,

gave a short laugh. "A vertigo it was, then. You need bleeding. I hope you won't get it to-night."

"To-night!" shouted Fawn, arousing with a start. "What do you know about to-night?"

Cantwell laughed. "Why, nothing, dear Fawn," he said, indifferently. "Don't start up like that; remember the vertigo. I said 'to-night' simply to round out my sentence. What's to pay to-night?"

"The devil's to pay, that's what," growled Simon, clasping one knee with his hands. "And you know it, too," he added, savagely.

The 'Squire smiled, and stepping to the side of Simon's chair, rested his hand upon the merchant's shoulder. "Brace up, good fellow," he said, cheerily. "You can't carry out your plans with an inverted nervous system. Let me, like Isaiah the prophet, 'Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.'"

Simon looked up. "Confound your ready-made quotations!" Then he laughed. "But tell me, John, what do you know; and why do you come here to-night?"

Cantwell drew up a chair and sitting in it, moved about until he faced Fawn. "I saw the governor this afternoon, as you know; and, having an inkling of your plans, thought to come and keep you company. Your loyalty is praiseworthy, Simon. I shall do nothing to spoil your program. But, faith, you would have spoiled it yourself had you clung to yonder solace." And he pointed to the bottle on the mantel-shelf.

"I am glad that you have come," was Simon's response, though his eyes disagreed with his words.

"You won't spoil my program," he added, "because you love the other party as little as I do. But there's no secret in that."

"Secret? Oh! no. But we have the secrets, haven't we, Simon? Magnificent, superb secrets!"

"True enough," answered the other, with a smile. "But they're all yours, not mine. But, going past that, it seems unusual to see you prowling about at this hour with a great cloak muffled about your ears. What's in the wind?"

"Some of the old business," the 'Squire said, with a constrained laugh. "John Ross, Mary's brother, is in town. Worse even than that, he is at my house, and I must walk the streets until he goes."

"You have not met him?"

"No; nor will I. He'd know me in the moment."

"My house is yours. Stay here until he is gone."

"I am grateful, Simon; and I must. Otherwise I could hardly avoid him. He is lodging under my roof as a friend of Rednap Howell, whom the governor — I'd like to thrash him for it — has imposed upon me as a guest to be watched until this infernal embassy is disposed of. My promise was to strive to detect this Howell and his friends in some treasonable act. But treasonable acts can go to thunder! I'm exiled until the town is clear of these pestilential Regulators. It's maddening, too, for I had a beautiful trap set for Howell. But John Ross protects him from me better than a battery of artillery. The boy must not see me."

"A bad case, John," said Simon, shaking his head. His composure had returned and the red shone again

upon his cheeks. "I will help you to keep dark until this unsuspecting brother of yours leaves New Bern."

"Tell me one thing, Simon. Is that man my brother? Tell the truth, good friend. Only tell me that he is not my brother; that the marriage with Mary Ross was, as I first thought it, a sham; and all that you have drained me of these years shall still be yours, to preserve the secret. Yes, and more too, if you demand it."

"How much more?" asked Simon, shrewdly.

"As much as I can pay—enough for any reasonable man — to be paid at one time, and to close this terrible account in full and forever."

Fawn's head shook with a plain negative. "Nay, John," he answered, "I cannot kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Besides, I must not tamper with the truth. You have taught me that lesson. Remember, friend John, the new motto you hung upon your wall last week reads: *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.* It is a wise maxim, good John, and does equal credit to your head and to your heart. So, let the truth prevail. I am bad enough, it's true; but when I acted as priest at your marriage with Mary Ross, I was provided with a proper license to legalize the ceremony. This I did," he continued, coolly, "not only as a protection to myself, but also to have a hold on you to help me in the time of need. I gave you a good, honest wife, man; you should have thanked me for it. If you failed to appreciate her, it was your fault, and yours alone. I knew nothing then of your other schemes."

"But I married her as John Matthews."

"Well, what if you did? You are John Matthews, the John Matthews who married her. Bill Jones would have done as well. Names simply establish identities. Your identity is easily proved without the 'Cantwell.' Besides, good friend, I have procured certain affidavits which you would scarcely care to contest in the courts. No, no, John; I was bad enough for some things, but not so far down as to ruin a poor girl for nothing. You'd better let the legality of that ceremony rest. She spares you; you have nothing to fear from me. The first register wrote John Matthews; the second, John M. Cantwell. The alias, if discovered, might embarrass such a spotless gentleman as yourself; but you are safe from me, as long — "

"As long as I pay for your silence?"

"Exactly, friend John. But, dropping that, there's one thing you never told me. When you went up the river before your marriage to this Ross girl, why did you pass as John Matthews? A mere romantic whim, you told me at the time; but there's precious little romance in your composition. Why was it?"

"The secret is not worth your knowing. There's no money in it."

"Very well; we're even on that. John Ross may be able to help me, if I ever wish to find it out."

"Fawn, you're a — "

"Spare the compliment, John; and change the subject. You wish to elude this boy, as you called him. Pretty old boy, now. Thirty, if he's a day. He has sharp eyes, too. He was in the store to-day and came so close to recognizing me that I feared for you and your secret. He surely would not forget you."

Cantwell paled a little. "He must not see me," he said, with ill-concealed agitation. "I wonder what brought him here. Can he have found some — " Cantwell stopped short and looked into the fire. His face looked pinched and old. Then he threw back his head with a harsh laugh. "He's harmless, I think; but he comes inconveniently. I must risk incurring Tryon's disfavor, and face the wonder and scandal to result from my sudden disappearance; all of this to keep from the recognition of this John Ross. I feel like a fugitive — "

" 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth!' " The words, in deep, sonorous tones, came from the outside of the house.

Fawn and Cantwell sprang to their feet with looks of blank amazement. Simon went to the door, opened it cautiously, peered into the darkness for a moment, then went into the street. He returned a moment later, but without a clue to point to the identity of the man who had thundered the Scripture into their ears. In the meantime the 'Squire, his face bearing a look of alarm, had sunk back into his chair.

"The street is a public thoroughfare," said Fawn, after a long and nervous silence. "It must have been the chance remark of some passer-by."

A quick rap at the door brought both men again to their feet.

"Who's there?" called Fawn, facing the door.

"A detail from Captain Neale."

Fawn drew a long breath. "Come in," he answered.

The door opened and a large man with heavy brown whiskers stepped forward. He wore a

corporal's uniform and saluted with military precision. "I have orders from the governor, through Captain Neale, to report to Mr. Fawn with twenty men."

"You are early. Why did you come so soon?"

"His Excellency suggested that we come early, that you might post us properly before the arrival of the other party."

"Not a bad idea," remarked Fawn, reflectively. "But still, it is a departure from the program."

"The governor is very exact in his arrangements," whispered Cantwell. "We do not know this man. Be careful."

The corporal did not move a muscle of his face.

Fawn looked at him closely. "I am Mr. Fawn," he said, coldly. "Did the governor write?"

"He did not; but he sent this as a safeguard." And he showed a heavy signet ring.

Fawn turned to Cantwell. "Do you know this ring?" he asked.

"Yes, it is Governor Tryon's. I saw it on the table in his study this afternoon."

"All right, corporal," said Fawn, with a smile. "Pardon my prudence; but this is a little out of my usual line. Make ready your men and I will meet you outside in a moment."

Hurriedly wrapping himself in a cloak and pressing a broad-brimmed hat upon his head Fawn started for the door. Checking himself a moment he turned to Cantwell.

"Shall I leave you here, John?"

"It would be better. Yes."

"Wait for me then. I'll be back in an hour." And

the merchant slammed the door behind him and went into the night.

The great woods were silent save for the answering calls of a pair of night-owls perched in wide-apart tree tops. Seated upon his cart Simon Fawn waited anxiously for the coming of Captain Maynard. How long the time was he never knew; it seemed hours, though it could not have been a score of minutes.

At last the bushes parted and a dark figure loomed up beside the merchant's horse.

Fawn gave a start. "Ah! Captain, you surprised me."

"Is the ammunition here?" asked Maynard, curtly.

"Yes, in the cart. How will you carry it?"

"Leave that to me. Here is your money. You cannot count it in the dark; but I think you can trust me for its correctness."

"Certainly, Captain. My coming here proves my confidence in you." He carefully put the money in his pocket.

"Your honesty is equally apparent," was Maynard's answer. "Your devotion to the good cause shall have its reward. Come, and help me get the ammunition to the ground."

For several moments they worked in silence.

Then Maynard spoke. "There, we've finished. And, good night. Remember us and our cause in your prayers, good friend. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'"

Simon felt the blood rush to his face. But, as the captain started away, Fawn coughed three times. The thickets round about them rustled with the rush of men.

"Quick work, boys!" cried the corporal.

A pair of strong arms encircled Simon from behind, and a cord drew tight about his arms.

"Easy, easy," whispered Fawn, confidentially, "not so tight. I'm Simon Fawn."

"Who cares a cuss who you are?" retorted the taunting voice of his captor; and the cord cut into the flesh with the strength of the next pull.

Simon, in wild astonishment, tried to rise to his feet. Some one rolled him over and sat upon his heaving chest. "What's the matter?" the merchant gasped.

" 'He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it.' "

It was the corporal who spoke; but the voice was changed. To Simon's ears the deep tones were like those of the Quaker who had smoked his pipe in Fawn's store that afternoon.

Half an hour later Governor Tryon and a dozen men rode down the lane to the spot marked out for Maynard's capture. For the governor, fond of setting traps, was even more fond of watching them. The horsemen halted in the glade where the deed was to have been done. A groan came from the woods beside the road. One of the men held a lantern toward the sound. Fawn's round face loomed out of the darkness. He was fastened to a tree with a dozen ropes.

The governor's rage knew no bounds. "Treachery!" he shouted, hoarsely. "Damnable treachery! Cut the fellow's bonds and see what the idiot can tell of this."

The story of the crestfallen merchant was lucid enough even for Governor Tryon.

The executive turned his horse sharply. "Fool!"

he hissed in Simon's ear. "You've made a mess of a child's task." Then, to a man at his side, "Go to Cantwell's house and arrest Rednap Howell and James Hunter. Ride like the devil!"

Then the little party slowly filed back as it had come; and Fawn, bruised and sore, his thoughts as black as the night about him, was left alone to walk his homeward way.

The officer who went to Cantwell's house found neither Howell nor Hunter; but one of the 'Squire's servants handed him a paper. Hastily he held it to the candle-light, and scanned its roughly-written words.

"For the governor," it read. "Try on, Tryon, my boy. You and your Fawn could learn wisdom from an ass. We bear you in our remembrance."

The paper was not signed; but the officer knew the handwriting. A smile forced itself to his lips, but gave place to a look of perplexity. "I can't give this thing to the governor," he muttered to himself. "He'd go mad and rage forever."

While he thought, his hand drew too close to the candle. A little flame, a cloud of smoke, and Howell's letter lay in ashes on the floor.

It was an accident; but the officer thanked God for it.

CHAPTER XII

Beauty, Love and Remorse

ON the night that Simon Fawn fell victim to his own snare Motier Du Val, after reading a few pages of Folard's *Strategy,* went down to the parlor to seek Lord Durham. The viscount, not yet returned from the De Vere mansion, was, of course, not to be found; but Lucille Creighton was.

The parlor was dark save for the ruddy light that came from the logs burning in the wide fireplace. Within the circle of this glow, dressed in soft amber silk, the dark-haired girl, seated in a great carved chair, watched the tongues of flame that curled upward and lost themselves in the chimney.

Motier, advancing toward her, thought that woman could never be lovelier than this. Indeed, many men had thought the same; but the women — why, the women all said that Miss Creighton was forward and designing, that her beauty was due more to art than to nature, and that she dressed disgustingly, dressed to look well in the eyes of men, with gowns that fitted too closely to her figure and that showed too much bare shoulder; that was what the women said. But Lucille, hearing of all this, laughed, and straightway cut her gowns lower and had them shaped more closely to the full curves of her waist and hips.

Motier, as has been said, thought her lovely as she sat before the fire, the lines of her yellow-clad figure standing out in vivid relief against the dark mahogany background of her gothic chair. The face which she turned toward him was aglow with pleasure, her lips parting in a smile of singular sweetness, her dark eyes meeting his with a marvelous tenderness in their depths. A long lace scarf was thrown negligently about her, and through its interstices gleamed the soft, warm tones of her faultless neck and shoulders. Her arms, full and round and firm, were bare to the little velvet strap that circled each shoulder, and her hands resting on the widely parted arms of the chair, were small and soft and white.

Without a word she followed him with her gaze until he bent over her chair. "You have come in good time, Motier, mon chèr," she said, as they clasped hands in greeting. "I wanted to see you, but feared that you and the captain-general would talk with Esther until daybreak."

"Daybreak!" laughed Du Val, drawing up a chair and taking his place beside her. "I must be up at daybreak, booted and spurred; for Tonta and I are going after a bear."

Lucille's smile faded away and a serious look came into her eyes. "A bear, Motier? Haven't you enemies enough without seeking them in the forests?"

Du Val looked at her quickly. "Enemies!" he repeated, with a puzzled look. "Who are my enemies?"

"I know but one, and he is enough — the man whom you taught so good a lesson to-day."

THE FACE WHICH SHE TURNED TOWARD HIM WAS AGLOW WITH PLEASURE.

"Cantwell?" said Motier, laughing quietly. "He can do no harm."

Lucille took a slip of paper from a fold of her dress. "Read that," she said, handing it toward him. "It was given to me while you men were having tea with Esther."

Motier took the note, and holding it to the firelight read it. Rudely scrawled though it was, its meaning was clear and pointed. "Estiemed Ladey," it started, "Tell the young Man they calls a frencher too look owt fer that air feller Jake cantwell. He is a badd Man to runn aginst and he can handel a Sord better than enny Man in north carlina. Jake sed when he went owt the prade groun, im going to fix that feller if i hang fer it." The letter bore no signature.

Du Val's smile was a little grim as he handed the missive back to Lucille. "At least," he said, "I have a friend, or you an admirer, who offsets this enemy."

"Who is he?" she asked, her anxiety unabated. "He signed no name."

"I do not know. Some day I must thank him. Who handed you his letter?"

"Henry, his Excellency's valet de chambre."

"Where did Henry get it?"

"From a messenger whom he did not know."

"Well, I'm glad he wrote the thing; a friend in need, you know." Then, crossing his knees, he sat staring into the fire.

Lucille, watching him closely, saw that his eyes were cold and that they glittered like polished steel. "What think you, Motier?" she asked, lightly. "Your

eyes gleam as do the governor's when some one says 'Herman Husbands.' "

Du Val laughed. "I was thinking," he answered, easily, "of our friend's statement that Cantwell can handle the sword. I cannot imagine the man with anything of higher grade than a club in his hands."

"But, mon ami, were he to attack you with a sword, what would you do? You have not been trained to the blade."

He looked at her with an amused smile. "You lived in Paris something like five years," he said. "Did you not hear of Louis La Bretonne, once captain in the guard and later master of fence in the court of Charles III of Spain?"

"He who the Marquise de Pompadour said had no enemies because he had no peer with the rapier?"

"The same."

"Did you know him?"

"I crossed blades with him twice a week for three years."

"As a pupil?"

"As a pupil."

Lucille clasped her hands together and laughed. "Ma foi, Motier! Cantwell cannot fight you."

"Cantwell must not fight me," Du Val rejoined, with a short laugh. "It would be murder for me to have an encounter with that fellow. Some one must tell him."

"Y-yes," she answered, doubtfully, "but who?"

"I will, to-morrow afternoon. Now, my fair one, let us lay these matters aside. Truly, Lucille, you're magnificent to-night!"

Smiling, she looked at him through her long lashes. "Say less and mean more," she cautioned. "You have flattered so long and so relentlessly, Motier, that now you cannot tell when you have passed the line between fact and fiction."

Motier leaned back, his head resting against the top of his chair. "The line between them?" he said, turning his gaze upon her. "When applied to you, ma chère, there is no line; all is fact."

"There, I told you so! You're blind even to that plain, straight line. What can one do with such a man as you?" Her question ended with a laugh, and Motier, had he been a few years older, would have passed it by with another laugh.

He stood for a moment at the parting of two ways; then took the wrong path. "What can one do?" he asked, slowly, looking toward the fire. "What can one do?" he repeated. "One can do much. Is it not so?"

She did not answer, but looking down, played with the ring upon her finger.

Motier leaned slowly forward, one cheek resting upon his hand, his lips formed in a half-smile. The fingers of his other hand played a little tattoo on the arm of his chair. She, wondering, watched him until, after a long minute, he turned his face toward her.

"You asked," he said, with his eyes fixed upon her face, "what one could do with such a man as I. Let me answer that it all lies with the 'one.' In general I should say very little — perhaps nothing; but to particularize, there is 'one' who might do much."

"And who?" she asked, raising her dark eyes and meeting his gaze.

"You would not believe me if I told you."

"Well," she said, laughing a response to his smile. "Let me guess. You mean Esther?"

"Esther? No, Esther is a politician."

"Miss De Vere?" A quick flash came to her eyes as she spoke the name.

"I do not know her."

"Madamoiselle in France?"

"She is married."

"Then let me amend, and say Madame in France."

"No, she uses hair-dye."

"Well, let me see. Sonora, the beautiful, in Madrid?"

"She is dead."

"The girl in Charleston?"

"A gay deceiver; she marries within the month."

"I've gone through the list," she said, with a pretty shrug. Then, leaning forward and resting one elbow on the mahogany chair-arm, "I give up, Motier; who is she?"

"The girl in the amber silk," he said.

Lucille's eyes, unwavering, still looked into his. She gave a low, pleased laugh. "But she's ineligible," she protested. Their faces were not two hand breadths apart, and he felt her warm breath upon his cheek. "She," Lucille continued, "is a royalist; you are a — "

"Royalist, too, if she is."

Whitening a little, she dropped back into her chair and looked down at the floor. Then, after a brief moment she bent forward and raising her eyes to the fire clasped one rounded knee with her hands. The change of pose lifted her silken skirt the veriest trifle,

but still enough to reveal her jeweled yellow slipper, and above that the round full lines of her perfectly modeled ankle. The lace scarf fell back from her shoulders and dropped, forgotten, to the floor, leaving her shoulders gleaming white in the firelight.

Motier, startled for the moment by her wondrous beauty, drew a quick breath. A soft Spanish exclamation came from his lips.

Lucille heard him. She turned her head slowly until their eyes met. He smiled, and his answer came in a swift gleam that swept across her face. The look died away and left her regarding him gravely and questioningly.

"Lucille, ma chère," he said, bending toward her and resting his hand on the arm of her chair, "what troubles the girl in the amber silk?"

"Much, Motier, much," was the slow answer. Then with a sad little smile, "More than you can ever know, my knight."

Motier flushed a little as she called him that which she had called him but once before, that day in Versailles, two years back, when he had led her through the rioting rabble safe to her uncle's house.

"Beauteous lady," he responded, with playful mockery, "can thy knight do nothing for thee now?"

"Tell me, Motier," and her voice sounded strained and distant. "You did not mean it when you said, a 'royalist, too, if she is,' did you?"

He looked at her with a puzzled smile. "Mean it, fair one! I said it, did I not?"

"Yes, but you say so much that you do not mean. Did you mean, deep in your heart, that you would be a

royalist if I were one too? Tell me that it was only gallantry, that you did not mean it!"

Motier saw nothing but her witching beauty, heard nothing but a soft sweet voice that made siren music in his ears. "I will repeat what I said before," he insisted, "and will say more than that, Lucille." And reaching out his hand, he laid it upon her arm, "I will say, princess mine, that royalist or insurgent, I will be what you may be — anything from king to slave, so long as I know you to stand upon the same ground with me."

She turned her head away from him and looked again into the fire. Spirit and self-possession were slowly coming back to her face. "You were not a royalist in France, mon chèr," she said. "Had you been one you would never have come to America."

"I am not in France now, chère."

"But the cause of the Regulators? You lean that way."

"My cause is yours and — the king's."

"You say it earnestly?" She was looking at him now, and the old smile was creeping back to her lips.

"Solemnly," he answered, unclasping her hands and taking one of them in his. "Earnestly and solemnly," he said, as he saw the strange, glad light in the depths of her eyes. And he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

She let her hand lie within his grasp for a moment, then slowly withdrew it. "It is well, Motier! A royalist you are from this moment!" She gave a soft musical laugh and her face flushed with excitement. "The king's cause is a righteous cause," she cried,

merrily. Then, raising her hand as though holding a glass between her fingers, she added, "Gentlemen, the king!"

"Long live the king!" echoed Du Val; and, although they in the parlor did not know it, on the self-same tick of the clock those very words had died on the lips of Simon Fawn.

They sat there silent and motionless, both looking into the fire. Motier still held her unresisting hand, and Lucille still seemed to feel the touch of his lips upon it. After a time Motier began talking of the old days in Versailles, when boy and girl together, they thought each other all in all. From Versailles the conversation turned to the one day they had spent together in London, then by almost imperceptible degrees they came back to the present.

When they had finished, the hour was late and the fire had died down to a mass of whitening embers.

"Come," said Lucille, rising to her feet. "Let us go. We can say good-night in the hall."

Together they ascended the broad stairway, hand in hand, she regal and stately in her perfect grace, he proud of mien, with latent power in his every move, both of an equal height and both good to look upon. William Tryon, governor of North Carolina, watched them as they passed from sight, although they knew it not, and he thought that he had never seen a fairer picture than those two made as they stood together on the first landing. Yet, pleasure was not in William's eye as he turned away from that scene.

Passing down the long hallway the couple stopped before her door. Motier bent his head and whispered

his good-night into her ear. As he spoke his cheek touched hers. It was only for a brief second, but in that second Motier's arm had circled her shoulders and his hand rested upon her further arm just below the little velvet strap. The light from the sconce on the wall shone dimly upon them, but still brightly enough for him to see the soft color that rose to her cheeks. Her head drooped until her brow reached his shoulder. Keeping his one arm about her, he raised her face with his free hand until with a sudden move she looked up.

She saw that he was smiling tenderly, more tenderly than she had ever seen him smile before, and with a half-whispered word she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him once, twice, thrice. Then with something that sounded like a sob she turned swiftly and disappeared into her room.

Lucille stood for a moment in the bright light of her room, her face pale and her lips trembling; then a low quivering moan came to her lips. "Motier," she sobbed, "what have I done? — oh! Motier, my knight! I loved you and I did not know it! Why have I done this! Motier, Motier, God forgive me! I've made you call the king's cause yours!"

She looked at the cold, portrayed features of the governor, high above her mantel, and frenziedly wrung her hands together. "He forced me to it!" she cried; "William made me do it! But," and she staggered into the middle of the room, her face buried in her hands and her shoulders shaking with her hard-drawn sobs, "God knows, I did not know I loved you!"

She raised her head and stared with great unseeing eyes at her image in the mirror. "Against his reason

and against his honor," she said, slowly. Then with a low, choking cry she threw herself face down across her canopied bed. "Darling," she sobbed, "forgive me, for I knew not what I did!"

But the face of William Tryon looked down from its canvas with hard, exultant eyes.

CHAPTER XIII

A Hunter Hunted

THE sky was reddening with the glow of the coming sun when Motier and Tonta went down to the stables. John, the hostler, was already there, and Du Val's blooded hunter and the Indian's pony were waiting outside the door.

Motier had been blessed with a good night's sleep, and, naturally, appeared in high spirits. The cool morning air set the blood to tingling in his veins, and, exuberant with strength and vitality, he wasted half an hour playing about the palace grounds with the governor's deer-hounds. Once they had him down in the grass, and when he rose with four of the great fellows clinging to him he laughed and laughed again as, matching his own strength against theirs, he pushed them backward and forward across the ground, and at last threw them in a writhing, growling heap on one of his Excellency's newly-spaded flowerbeds.

But Tonta, Indian though he was, heard something in Motier's ringing tones that made him shake his head. "Caiheek no laugh good," he said to himself; then with a French oath that came awkwardly from his untutored lips, "Caiheek see too much Dark-Eyes. No do Caiheek good." Tonta may have been right, there was the even chance that he might be wrong, yet not

only then, but throughout the day, he saw that Motier's mind was often far away from the hunt, and that his eyes were more than once fixed upon the ground when they should have been scanning the woods about them. Tonta did not like this; for had he not seen Caiheek Lieutenant in Charleston look that way one night a year ago, and was not Caiheek Lieutenant found across his bed the next morning with a little blue spot on his temple and a silver-mounted pistol grasped in his hand? And the girl — But that was Tonta's secret. He looked again at Motier. "Too much think," he muttered under his breath. "Dark-Eyes bad for lieuten't; bad for Caiheek."

About the middle of the afternoon Motier and Tonta, homeward bound, rode side by side along the bed of a dried-up forest stream, the Frenchman sitting easily in his saddle, the Indian bobbing up and down on his stiff-legged pony. They had found their bear, and its scalp hung from Motier's belt, where it well belonged; for Du Val had fought the greatest fight of his life in mastering Bruin, having brought the brute to his death after a rough and tumble conflict in which the hunter's knife and the bear's teeth and claws were the only weapons used. Motier had placed himself in this unpleasant position by letting fly with both his rifle and his pistol at a buck that swept past them as they sat by their fire cooking a rabbit. Before the weapons were reloaded the bear had come upon the scene, chasing Tonta up a tree and waiting, with flaming eyes and mouth afoam, for Motier's welcome. In this the bear made a grievous error, for Du Val was over-cordial and his knife-blade was keener even than

the little shafts of wit which he shot at the bear when a lull in the fight gave him breath. Tonta, sitting astride a shaking limb, cried repeatedly for Motier's permission to take a hand in the fracas, but each time met with the injunction, "Stay where you are: this is my guest." But, nevertheless, when the time came, the Indian removed the scalp and made a post-mortem examination of the knife thrusts. Then with something like a smile, he looked first at the shaggy body, then at Motier's athletic figure and at the keen-edged knife which the young man held in his hand.

"Ugh!" he grunted, thrusting his finger into one of the jagged cuts, "Bear fool!" And that was his only comment on the fight.

Motier shook off the preoccupied air which had secretly annoyed the Indian, and the two, riding back toward town, laughed and talked with one another as master and servant seldom do. For Tonta, although a valet in the pay of Motier and his father, had given proof of such loyalty that their relations were those of the warmest friendship. Tonta was the guide who had led the two Frenchmen through the forests from Charleston to New Bern; he had saved the elder Du Val's life at the fording of the Cape Fear River; and he had rescued them both from a threatened attack by a marauding band of Sinnegar warriors.

But despite all these things Tonta frequently imperilled his position with the Du Vals by his wholesale taking of other people's property. The Indian was a thief of unparalleled ability. He stole for the love of stealing, and the greater the obstacles in his way the more ingenious were his efforts to

surmount them. Of this flaw in Tonta's heathen nature Motier was talking as they wound down the course of the dry stream-bed.

"Tonta, you'll ruin me yet," Du Val was saying, with a half-repressed smile. "What imp of Satan possesses you to do these things?"

"White man cheat, Indian steal," was the stolid reply.

"Do I cheat, Tonta?"

"Tonta no steal from Caiheek."

"No; but what is just as bad, you bring your stolen goods to my room."

"Tonta sorry. Tonta love Caiheek; try be good."

"You're always saying that—and always forgetting it. But now Tonta, you've carried this thing too far. If you don't stop it, we'll have to part."

"Sinnegars try catch Caiheek — want kill — Tonta save Caiheek."

"I remember that, Tonta; and I'm grateful for it; but why can't you stop stealing?"

"Great Spirit make Tonta steal."

"How do you prove that?"

"Great Spirit make Indian?"

"Yes."

"Indian die?"

"Yes."

"Great Spirit make him die?"

"Y-yes." Motier began to see the drift of the argument.

Tonta smiled. "Same way," he said. "Great Spirit make Indian; Indian steal; Great Spirit make Indian steal. Good?"

"Not bad," muttered Du Val; for he saw that Tonta's theology was better than that of eight-tenths of the world's theologians. It was simple, it was plausible, and, more than these, its author believed it himself.

Still, Tonta was a thief; and Motier went on with his arraignment. "Let's drop the Great Spirit for the present," he said, "if he makes you steal he can make you stop stealing. You can't understand that; but you can understand that you'll get into trouble if some one catches you taking these things. Suppose Mr. Fawn had caught you with that knife yesterday; you would have been in jail now. And the watch? Suppose the governor had found it in my room; what would he have done? As it was, I found it hard to explain."

Tonta lifted his eyebrows, but did not answer.

"And the governor's bootjack? You wear moccasins; what do you want with a bootjack?"

"Me no want it — me took it."

"Then, what of the money you took from Lord Durham? You like him; why did you steal from him?"

"Great Heart give Tonta money — Tonta no want it; Great Heart put away — Tonta steal it. All good now — Caiheek take back."

"Yes; right enough there, for Lord Durham happens to be your friend. But how about those other things: ten or twelve handkerchiefs, and a drawerful of combs, and books, and a razor — What can you do with a razor? No more than you could with a bootjack. All these things must be returned; but how?"

"Tonta took 'em; Tonta put back."

"Brief enough, and to the point; but — And, say, worst of all, how on earth did you get Lady Tryon's garter?"

"Lady on horse — Tonta hold stirrup; Lady smile Tonta — garter come down — Tonta get it."

Motier's look of astonishment had in it something of admiration at Tonta's boldness. "Well, I swear!" he exclaimed. "But I can't return that for you. What have you done with it?"

"Took him back."

"You did! How?"

"Door open — look in — see nobody. Put garter on table."

"I'll wager half my income you stole something else before you came out."

"Lady come — Tonta hide — heap 'fraid. Lady stay long time — 'fraid catch Tonta — hang like Yawhauk. Bye bye lady sleep — Tonta take scalp —"

"What!" thundered Du Val, reining in his horse. "You did what?"

"Me take scalp," repeated Tonta, quietly. "See." And, reaching into his hunting pouch, he produced a bunch of dark false hair.

"Well, Tonta," said Motier, with a tone of hopeless resignation. "I don't know what to do with you. Take the scalp back yourself. No one else can do it for you. Now, have you taken anything else besides all this stuff?"

"No much — gov'nor ring."

"The governor's ring? Which one, the big signet ring?"

"Caiheek say right."

"H'm!" Motier looked grave. "What did you do with the ring?"

"Me save Cap'n. Cap'n good man — Tonta love Cap'n."

"But how did the ring save him?"

"Tonta give ring to Great Heart. Great Heart fix Cap'n."

Motier was puzzled, but he asked no more questions of Tonta. How could Lord Durham, a recent arrival from England, be entangled with Captain Maynard, a fugitive from justice hiding in the woods of North Carolina? Knowing nothing of the viscount's previous residence in the province Du Val could not penetrate the mystery of Durham's use of the governor's signet ring. But he stowed the thought away in his mind for safe keeping.

They cantered down the brook-bed, until, rounding a bend, they rode between two high wooded banks. Before them opened a broad sunny glade with bright plumaged birds darting hither and thither across the open. Motier, riding a little ahead, turned back to Tonta. "Pretty, isn't it?" he called, pointing to the space ahead of them.

Tonta turned his eyes in the direction of Motier's finger. Suddenly he gave a start and pulled back his pony. "Shoot, Caiheek! Yawhauk!"

With a quick move Du Val pulled his horse upon his haunches. In the same instant, jerking his pistol from its holster, he fired point-blank at a head that peered from behind a tree. As he fired, a rifle ball clipped his bridle rein and passed under his left arm.

Motier laughed. His horse had bolted; but dropping the parted bridle he bent forward and tried to catch the rings on the bit before the horse could shake the iron from his mouth. Here, for once, Motier's careless confidence played against him. Looking down at the horse's head he failed to see the low-limbed tree which stood in their course. The frightened animal passed safely beneath it; but Motier, raising his head as he caught the bit-rings in his fingers, struck a great knotted limb with his forehead and was thrown heavily to the ground. The horse dashed on through the forest.

Tonta, riding close behind, pulled back his pony and, tumbling to the ground, bent over the senseless Frenchman. He saw the cut across his forehead, saw the blood oozing from it, held his hand over Motier's mouth and felt no breath from it, then sitting cross-legged beside his Caiheek he began rocking backward and forward and wailing with grief.

"Stop your noise, boy!" sounded a deep voice at his side. "Let me see your master."

Tonta sprang to his feet.

He who had spoken was a tall man, his features half hidden by a broad slouched hat and his form enveloped in a light grey cloak that nearly swept the ground.

Tonta held out a greasy hand. "Bobbasheelah save him Caiheek," he said, joyfully. "Cap'n say Caiheek no dead?"

Maynard bent over Du Val's prostrate figure. His fingers slipped about his wrist and his other hand felt the cut upon the forehead. "Your Caiheek is alive,"

he said, at last; "but take your cup and bring some water."

Taking Motier's rifle Tonta ran back to the spring which bubbled from the ground near the spot where the rifleman had ambushed Du Val. When he returned he handed the filled cup to Maynard.

After the captain had forced some water between Motier's lip and had bathed his gaping wound he turned to the Indian. "Now, Tonta," he said, "you — But what's that?"

Tonta held out a blood-stained handkerchief.

Captain Maynard took it in his hand. "Where did you get this?" he asked, sharply.

"By tree — Yawhauk shoot Caiheek."

Maynard turned the handkerchief until the initials on its border were right side up. Then a quick, fierce light came into his eyes. The letters were J. C. C., and he knew that J. C. C. — He looked up. "From what I have heard of this Du Val," he said, under his breath, "if he lives through this I should hate to give a farthing for the life of J. C. C. And if the boy dies — " Maynard laughed, but the sound seemed to Tonta like the growl of an angry panther. Maynard's eyes were merciless and his lips curled as had Motier's when he smiled into J. C. C.'s rifle-barrel.

But the fates were spinning their threads; for J. C. C. might well have stood for Jacob Creamly Cantwell.

CHAPTER XIV

A Cracked Skull, and a Victory

ON the broad veranda of the De Vere mansion at Beechwood stood Captain Maynard and Mr. De Vere. The officer's horse, tied to a tree on the front lawn, was breathing heavily, and Maynard's face was still flushed with his hard riding. Back of the house, browsing in the long grass, were Tonta's pony and Doctor Ignatius Boggs' bay mare. Somewhere between Beechwood and the governor's palace Du Val's Fleetfoot with Tonta on his back was tearing over the road with a summons for the senior Du Val to hasten to his son's bedside, and for Lord Durham to come to the De Vere house to meet Captain Maynard.

Mr. De Vere, a man with refinement in every line of his delicate features, turned the conversation to Motier, whom Maynard and Dr. Boggs had brought to the house but a few minutes before. "I fear," he said, concernedly, "that the boy is dangerously injured. Boggs seems much disturbed at his present symptoms and for some reason is withholding his opinion. But what shall we tell M'sieur Du Val about the accident?"

"Tell him all about the accident," answered Maynard, "except its indirect cause. He could do no good with Jacob Cantwell, and his peace of mind would

be secured far better if he knew nothing of his son's enemy. If the young man lives, Cantwell's chances are very slight; if he dies, the situation will still be the same."

De Vere's face was troubled. "But the law, my dear Captain?" he said, rather weakly. "Why not arrest this Cantwell and hold him pending young Du Val's recovery? That seems the proper way."

"Do you know Cantwell's father—the magistrate?"

"No; but I have heard that he is a good man, true to the law and to his judgment of the right and the wrong."

"If you have heard these things," responded Maynard, with some bitterness, "apply them in the negative and act accordingly."

De Vere looked puzzled. "But," he pleaded, anxiously, "you don't mean to carry on this matter outside of the law?"

"I do," was the quiet response.

"And punish the man yourself?"

"Unless Motier Du Val lives to relieve me of the trouble."

"But what could he do?"

"I know this Du Val as little as you do; but if his face does not belie him, Cantwell will have to pay the bill in full."

Mr. De Vere caught the significance of Maynard's words, and he gave a little shudder. "I'm afraid," he said, helplessly, "that these things are a little out of my sphere. The law seems to me to — "

"But you are not Motier Du Val," interrupted the captain, smiling; "neither are you William Maynard.

When we know we are right we act first and consult the king's law afterward."

"Well, please don't discuss that with me any more," answered De Vere, nervously. "I am not a man of action and I don't care to be drawn into such bold undertakings as you younger men devise."

"Don't worry, my good friend," returned Maynard, placing his hand on the other's frail shoulder. "We won't involve you in any of our plots. We'll reserve you for our diplomatic service."

Mr. De Vere smiled, for his hobby was diplomacy, which he imagined he had mastered. True, he possessed some such talent, but this, like his physique, was weak and nervous. He kept his adversaries in good humor by a system of lavish flattery and frequent apology. Dreading friction, he avoided quarrels, even when his attitude was self-abasing and detrimental to his best interests. In other words, he feared men's anger more than he respected his own opinions, deferring and conciliating when one stronger than he would have resented and fought to the death.

Maynard looked at his watch. "Tonta has just reached the palace," he said. "If he can find Durham and bring him here I can leave at seven. But Ross — "

A servant came from the house. "Mr. Ross, in the reception-room," he announced.

"Excuse me, De Vere," the captain said, bowing to the older man. "My friend awaits me. See if you can extort some opinion from the doctor before the senior Du Val comes."

Ross arose as Maynard entered the room. The captain extended his hand. "Sit down, Ross," he said,

in a low tone, "and tell me where Husbands and the men are."

"Husbands, with twenty men, is in the woods beyond the road," answered Ross, "Hunter and Howell are between here and Hillsborough, and have communicated with Husbands as late as last night."

"Does Husbands expect to stay in his present position until I join him?"

"He will wait until nightfall for you."

"What are your plans?"

"I expect to go home to-night, unless — " He hesitated a moment, and looked at Maynard. "Unless something happens to keep me in New Bern." he continued.

"Something personal?"

"Very."

Maynard smiled a little. "Well," he said, rising to his feet, "tell Husbands to keep within earshot. If I need help I'll give the owl call."

John, leaving the reception-room, sent word to his sister Mary, who for years past had been a member of the De Vere household, and asked for an interview with her.

Mary came down as soon as Mrs. De Vere could relieve her from attendance upon Motier. Taking John to her room, Mary opened the conversation. "John," she asked, anxiously, "you're not involved with those Regulators, are you? I heard the footman say that you and Captain Maynard were having a consultation in the parlor."

"So we were, sister — in the reception-room," was John's good-humored answer; "and to take up your

question, perhaps I am 'involved with those Regulators.' It looks like it, anyway. I helped them to capture some of the governor's powder last night, and I'm here this afternoon to keep Captain Maynard from being gobbled up by the royal troops. He seems to like hanging around the lions' den; and he keeps us on pins and needles half the time. But," he continued, more seriously, "there's another matter I want to ask you about. While we were beating around the woods last night Herman Husbands asked me if I knew 'Squire Cantwell. I said, 'No.' Husbands laughed and said that Cantwell knew me; that passing by Fawn's store at ten o'clock last night he heard Cantwell say that he didn't want me to meet him. Now, you've lived down here nearly fifteen years and know the New Bern people better than I do. Is there any reason why Cantwell should wish to avoid me?"

Mary, her face pale and drawn, looked out of the window. "It is hard to tell, John," she answered. "'Squire Cantwell is a very peculiar man: he may have some little dislike, some fancied reason for not caring to meet you. I really would pay no attention to him."

John laughed. "Well," he said, "perhaps you're right; but I'll hunt him up to-night and see."

Mary turned quickly. "Oh! John," she cried, with visible excitement, "don't go! Don't go near that man! He — " She stopped suddenly, and her glance fell to her apron.

"He — what?" asked John curiously; for he could not understand Mary's agitation.

"He — I cannot tell you, John; but you must not go near him!"

John gave a low whistle. "I can't see why this business should disturb you, sister," he said, kindly. "I want to please you; but, honestly, I don't see why you ask me to keep away from this fellow. What is he to you?"

"It is nothing, John," she said, with an effort at self-control. "But I have a presentiment that you and he ought not to meet. Won't you promise me to leave him alone?"

John shook his head. "No," he answered, firmly. "I can't let a presentiment come in my way in this matter. There's a mystery in it somewhere. I will fathom it to-night." Then, kissing her good-bye, he left the house and, making a long detour, was swallowed up by the woods.

Mary, alone in her room, prayed that Cantwell and her brother might never meet. She had made a misstep when she withheld her secret from John. Had she told her brother that Cantwell was the John Matthews who had deserted her seventeen years before, the situation would have been greatly improved. For John would then have gone to Cantwell in hot blood and would have shot him without the formality of argument. This would have ended the matter with more satisfaction to Ross, and with less future trouble for Cantwell.

When Captain Maynard returned to the veranda he found that Alice De Vere had joined her father and that the two sat together on a rustic bench where the sun's parting rays shone upon them.

"Ah! Alice," said the captain, drawing up a chair and seating himself in front of them. "You're a good angel to come to us old fellows and brighten our moss-grown hearts. How is your patient now?"

"Dr. Boggs says that reaction will have to set in before he can tell," said Alice, a far-away look in her blue eyes. "He says — What did he say, father? I can't remember those hideous words."

De Vere smiled. "He said, Maynard, that he cannot tell how the boy is until he rallies from the comatose state in which he now is. He speaks of a depression of the skull at the upper suture of the temporal bone, and fears pressure on the brain."

"H'm!" muttered Maynard. "Bad case, isn't it?"

"Yes. Boggs expects to operate to-morrow."

They were silent for several minutes.

"Alice," said Maynard, at last. "I heard that you saw the governor's grand review yesterday. What did you think of it?"

Miss De Vere, brushing back a golden ringlet from her temple, laughed. "Magnificent," she answered, sarcastically. "It gave his Excellency a splendid opportunity for self-display. King George could have carried no higher head."

"True enough," assented the officer, with a smile. "But how did you like the after-play?"

"The after-play? Oh! yes. You mean the fight? That was grand! Poor fellow!"

"Which one?" laughed Maynard.

"Ours — Mr. Du Val, I mean."

"Ah! 'ours' already, eh? Well, Alice, he seems well fitted for a beau ideal. Think so?"

"Why, Captain! You talk so lightly: the poor man may die before night."

"No, indeed, my child. He won't die — at least, not yet; he has too much to live for."

"Too much to live for?" repeated Alice, looking closely at him. "Has he more than any one else?"

"Why, yes! Golden Head," he answered, playfully. "He has yet to meet you."

"Oh! Captain." Alice's face had flushed a little. "You do say such ridiculous things. I thought you were speaking of Miss Creighton."

The captain looked up. "Miss Creighton?" he repeated, quickly. "Who is Miss Creighton?"

"A guest at the palace, and a distant relative of the governor. She came here from the South, but originally from England."

"Her first name?"

"Lucille."

"Ah!"

Alice looked at Maynard with a queer little smile. "Do you know her?" she asked, innocently enough—to all appearances.

"I knew her in Charleston," he answered, slowly. "She is beautiful, as I remember; tall and dark, with wonderful personal magnetism."

Alice nodded. "Yes," she said, coldly. "She's the one. Mr. Du Val is said to be greatly attached to her."

Maynard said something under his breath. "He is, eh?" he said, a queer look crossing his face. "Mr. De Vere, you've heard of Lieutenant John — " The captain gave a quick jerk of the head. The hoot of an owl came faintly from the woods to the rear of the

house. "Excuse me," said Maynard, quickly. And rushing past them he darted into the hall.

But Alice wanted to hear what the name of Lieutenant John — whoever-he-was — had to do with Lucille Creighton.

Captain Maynard ran through the long hallway to the back of the house. Nearing the door, he heard the tramp of horses' hoofs. "My men!" he muttered with a frown. "Why in thunder didn't they stay where they were?"

He reached for the knob, but the door opened in his face. "What does this — Ah! Captain," he said, gayly. "Pray walk in!" For Captain Neale, of the governor's Rangers, stood in the doorway, and Captain Neale's great horse-pistol was thrust under Maynard's nose.

The intruder smiled grimly. "Captain Maynard," he said, "I arrest you in the king's name."

Maynard smiled into the muzzle of the pistol. "What's in a name?" he laughed. "This artillery does the work; the king's name scares me as little as anything on earth."

"We won't argue that," was the curt response. "My orders are to take you — "

"Dead or alive?"

"Yes."

"And if I don't surrender?"

"I must shoot."

"Well said, Captain; but I doubt if a brave officer would disgrace his epaulettes by shooting even an enemy in cold blood. It shows a lack of principle, you — "

"Do you surrender?" shouted Neale, pushing his pistol closer to Maynard's face; for he saw that the prisoner was playing desperately for time.

"Bah! Captain," said the other, with a shrug. "Your pistol has a vile smell. Why don't you take it down to the river and scrub out the barrel?"

"Do you surrender?" roared out Neale.

"Well, seeing I have you to deal with, I might consider it."

"Here, here! What does this mean?" sounded De Vere's querulous voice through the hall. "Officer, you entered my house unannounced! Apologize, sir!" But, De Vere, catching a glimpse of the captain's pistol, scurried back to his lair; for he was not a man of action.

The door at Maynard's side opened a scant two inches. The end of a pistol barrel poked through the opening.

Neale's hand began to tremble. "Surrender! Or, by — "

"Oh! no you won't. Move a finger and the pistol you see in this door will blow your soul to — to — Hillsborough! Tonta, come out and see the gentleman; but keep your pistol at his ear. Now, Captain, your weapons, please. Thanks! No, no, don't call your men. You have ten and I a hundred. Hear them?"

A thunder of shouts intermingled with a few scattered shots told what was happening outside. It ended in a babble of many voices, all talking at once.

Neale, utterly discomfited, maintained a surly silence.

"Come on, Captain," said Maynard, linking his

left arm in the captain's right. "Give me your pistol, Tonta. Now, Captain mine, let's step outside and look at the weather."

They went through the doorway. The twilight was close into the night, but the grey afterglow was bright enough for Neale to see his men, disarmed and disheartened, in the enemy's gracious hands.

"Now, Captain," said Maynard, as, still arm in arm, they entered the house. "Let's go into this little room. Tonta, boy, light a candle. There, that's better. Now, Captain, here's a table, and pen and ink and paper. Let me tell you what I'll do. I will release you now and give you a pass through my lines" — all Maynard's lines were congregated in the backyard; but Neale did not know it — "if you promise to delay your report to the governor until to-morrow night. Mind you, I'm not asking a favor: I'm granting one. What do you say?"

Neale raised his head stiffly. "No," he answered, shortly. "A king's officer cannot recognize any offer made by an outlaw."

"As you will," retorted Maynard, with an easy laugh. "Husbands!" he called.

"Sir!" answered the deep voice of the Quaker.

"Captain Neale is our prisoner. Take him."

Husbands came forward, a long rope in his hands. "Fast bind, fast find," he said, with a chuckle. "Keep your protests to yourself, Captain dear." And with a few deft turns he bound the captive's hands behind him.

As Husbands dragged him to the door Neale turned his head toward Maynard. "You'll regret this,"

he cried, hotly. "You've turned the tables on me this time, but you won't do it again."

Maynard, laughing quietly, sat down in a chair and raised his feet to the table. "Be calm, dear boy!" he said, very sweetly, as he drew his pipe from his pocket and filled it. "These little things are only preliminary: wait till we settle down to business. Good-night, Captain, good-night! And say, Captain!" he called, as an afterthought. Neale, standing with Husbands in the doorway, turned his head. His face was white and he bit furiously at his mustache.

Maynard, wreathed in tobacco-smoke, waved one hand with a graceful gesture. "Pleasant dreams, Captain!" he said, with a sparkle in his dark eyes. "Breakfast at six, you know."

With a ripping curse Neale turned his back and was dragged into the gloom.

CHAPTER XV

Motier Receives Company

JOHN ROSS reached Cantwell's house at ten o'clock that night. He had thought much of Mary's unaccountable agitation and of her effort to keep him away from the 'Squire. These things were in his mind when he stood before Cantwell's door; and with a sudden resolve he dropped his hand from the knocker, and turning the knob entered the house, passing unannounced into the 'Squire's reception-parlor.

'Squire Cantwell looked up in surprise at the unexpected entrance of his visitor, whom, at first glance, he failed to recogniże. "You should have knocked," he said, sharply, glaring across the table at the intruder.

John pushed his hat-brim from his forehead. "Think so?" he said, coolly, fixing his eyes upon Cantwell's face.

The 'Squire sank back into his chair, his jaw dropped and his eyes seemed bursting from their sockets. "John Ross!" he said, at last. "What do you want with me?"

John still looked at him. His face was set like stone and his eyes were cold and hard. "Had I thought that 'Squire Cantwell and John Matthews were one

and the same," he said, "I should have adopted a different course. You ask what I want with you: I want you to write an open letter over your own signature and to print it in the New Bern *Gazette,* acknowledging your marriage to my sister in 1754 and your desertion of her three years later. That is what I want with you."

"But I have adjusted this matter with your sister," protested Cantwell.

"Perhaps you have. But you're talking with me now."

"You're meddling in other people's affairs."

"Perhaps I am; but you can't keep me from it. I expect — "

Cantwell rose to his feet. "I decline to discuss this matter any further," he said, with a show of austerity.

John shrugged his shoulders. "Decline all you please," he answered, coolly, "but you'll listen first to all I have to say. Sit down."

"Get out of — "

"Sit down!"

"You dirty — "

John made a step toward him.

Cantwell dropped into his chair. "If you threaten me," he blustered, "you'll go to the jail — and stay there."

"Will you write that letter?" asked John, sternly.

"No; I won't."

Ross turned on his heel. "Very well," he said, moving toward the door. "I will."

Cantwell rubbed his hands together and laughed

satirically. "But your proofs, my dear fellow, your proofs!"

"I have the proofs," was the quick retort; "and Simon Fawn can supply the further evidence. I give you until to-morrow at noon to place your statement in the hands of the editor of the *Gazette*. If you fail, I'll make the statement myself, and suit will be entered against you in the superior court." Without another word he turned and left the house.

At nine o'clock the next morning Doctor Boggs, M. Du Val and Mary Ross were in Motier's room. The young Frenchman was in a critical condition, and Boggs was preparing to operate, before noon, on the indented skull. Motier was slowly awakening from the stupor in which he had lain for over sixteen hours; but his speech was thick and disconnected. He spoke entirely in French, but at intervals the watchers caught the name of Lucille.

Doctor Boggs, noticing these repetitions, turned to M. Du Val. "Who is this Lucille?" he asked.

"Lucille Creighton," the father answered, "a relative of the governor, and one of Motier's warmest friends."

"Yes, I see," responded the doctor. Then, under his breath, "Lucille Creighton! Where have I—Aha!" And he bent lower and fumbled with the bandage on his patient's head.

Doctor Boggs was an elderly man of slight build, but vigorous and active. His eyes were large and dark and shone with frank kindliness under his shaggy grey brows. He was well-read in his profession, inclined a little to the dogmatic, but was, withal, an

entertaining and an untiring talker. When dressed for the street Boggs was a fashion-plate model of the period, and his snuff-box and his gold-headed cane were his invariable companions.

The senoir Du Val, who sat near the foot of the bed, had lived a full three-score years. His features were regular and his face was particularly noticeable from the startling contrast of his snowy white hair with the deep black of his eyebrows and mustache. His expression was peculiarly placid, emotion never showing in any of its lines, his eyes always meeting with calm and candor those who looked into his face. His figure, although not muscular, was graceful and well-knit. Doctor Boggs, looking from the father to the son, could see no point of resemblance between the two.

After Motier's longest effort at speech Boggs looked up. "Monsieur Du Val," he said, "your son's talk seems a little rambling to my ears; but he speaks in French, which I cannot understand. Would you mind being my interpreter when he starts again?"

M. Du Val drew his chair nearer. Ten minutes of silence ensued; then Motier, turning his head slightly, began to speak, slowly and with evident effort. M. Du Val's voice, in English, followed his son's. "Lucille, fair one, it is too late now — too late. You have my word, and I will keep it. Even though I loved you less — "

"Enough, Monsieur," said the doctor.

The interpreter stopped, but Motier continued for several minutes more.

Boggs shook his head. "Some things are worse

than a cracked skull," he muttered to himself, as he mixed some medicine in a glass; "and Lucille Creighton is one of those things."

Thus it appears that with Tonta's memory of "Caiheek Lieuten't," Captain Maynard's reference to Lieutenant John somebody in Charleston, and, lastly, Doctor Boggs' caustic comment upon Lucille, the path of Motier's romance looked like a mountain road leading up to a grey bank of cloud. Who could tell what lay beyond the mist?

A few minutes later Mrs. De Vere came to the door and called Mary. Together they went down the stairs to meet the messenger who had come from New Bern. The words of his letter were simple, and their meaning so clear that Mary grasped it all as she read the first words.

John Ross had been found at daybreak, dead, with a knife-thrust in his back, lying in a path on the outskirts of the town.

The circumstances of the murder were cloaked in mystery. Ross, having spent the most of his time on the farm up the river, had few acquaintances in New Bern; and he had never known of the existence of an enemy. Although Mary knew that John had left her with the avowed intention of calling upon Cantwell, she did not associate the 'Squire with the murder. Bad though the man was, she did not think him capable of taking a human life. So she ascribed her brother's death to his association with the Regulators, whose lives were ever threatened by a thousand dangers.

At one o'clock in the afternoon M. Du Val came down to the parlor and announced that the doctor had

operated successfully upon Motier's skull, had relieved the pressure on the brain, and that the patient had fallen into a quiet sleep. The news brought gladness to the hearts of all who heard it, although the gloom of Mary's new misfortune had touched the entire household.

As the days went by Motier improved rapidly. M. Du Val remained with him, and Lord Durham, the De Vere's nearest friend, was a frequent visitor. Captain Maynard stole to the house one evening at sundown and left Motier's room with a cheerful smile; for something had drawn the two men together, and, though one was forty-five and the other but twenty-one, they had found many common interests.

John Ross was buried beside his mother on the river shore near the log cabin which had been his life-long home. Lord Durham had expected to attend the funeral, but a hasty summons to Hillsborough prevented. Thus it was that Mary could not carry out her long cherished plan of telling Durham, or Mr. Noel, as she still called him, that his wife and child had not been killed when the hostile Indians raided the village of the Neusiocs, but that Mrs. Noel had died in Mary's own house and that her grave was close by the one in which they had laid Ross. Perhaps it was as well that she could not tell this; for Durham's question would have been, "My wife lies here; but where is the little girl?" And this Mary was not prepared to answer.

Of the six who had once eaten of their daily bread in the cabin by the Neuse — the widow Ross, her son John, Matthews and Mary his wife, and the little boy and the baby girl — all were gone but Mary. So it was

that after closing the little cabin she went back to the place which she called home — the mansion of the De Veres.

A week after Doctor Boggs had lifted Motier's mind from its shadow he sent the young man out of doors. Mrs. De Vere, handsome and gracious, walked with him through the garden, and talking in Madame's native tongue — for she, too, was a child of France — they laughed away a happy hour. Mrs. De Vere, with a mother's art, said little of her daughter Alice, but what she did say was enough to inspire Motier with some interest; but again, with a mother's art, she said, "Wait until to-morrow."

The next day young Du Val breakfasted with the family, excepting only Alice, who had driven to New Bern to buy some silks. Motier charmed his auditors with his ease of manner and his graceful conversation, and, parrying with the keen wit of Mrs. De Vere, he kept that woman's worthy husband with mouth agape and eyes that expanded with every shaft of repartee. For De Vere, although a diplomat, could but marvel at any man who would argue a point with Mrs. De Vere.

Later in the morning, as Motier sat in the garden awaiting his father's coming, he heard a footfall on the gravel path, and raised his eyes. There, lovely and queenly, her eyes and her lips joining in a radiant smile, with her arms outstretched toward him, stood Lucille Creighton.

"Motier!"

"Lucille!"

That was all that Alice De Vere heard as, returning from her drive, she left her carriage at the garden gate

and passed down the path behind the rose trees. But the "Motier!" had beneath its music such love as she had never heard in the voice of woman, and the "Lucille!" — Alice felt as though something had gone wrong with the universe. She passed on quickly and left them together in the garden. If she only could find some clue to the story of Lieutenant John whoever-he-was!

After Lucille had done with telling Motier how she had suffered with him, how well he was looking and how glad she was to see him again; and after Motier had finished telling how he had thought and had dreamed of her, how beautiful she was and what happiness her presence gave, she took a letter from some hidden pocket and handed it to him.

He opened it, and a commission as aide-de-camp on the captain-general's staff stared him in the face. He laughed as he looked up at Lucille. "Lucille, chère," he said, folding the paper and slipping it into his pocket, "you are holding me to my word, I see: 'a royalist, too, if she is.'"

Lucille, looking down, pushed a little pebble about with the tip of her shoe. "Are you sorry, Motier?"

"Sorry!" he exclaimed, taking her hand and pressing it to his lips. "Nothing that you could do would cause me regret; unless —"

"Unless what?"

"Unless," he continued, "you changed your mind and did not —"

She raised her eyes and he saw the moisture that glittered under their lashes. "Change, Motier?" she said, with a low, happy laugh. "Sometimes I wish that

I might." Whatever else she may have said was whispered in Motier's ear, for he caught her in a swift embrace, and they stood for a moment forgetting all in the world save that their arms were about one another and that their lips were met in a kiss that, long and ardent though it was, seemed but a touch.

"Again, before you go?" whispered Motier, as they unclasped their arms.

She shook her head and laughed. "No, sweetheart, you're too greedy; but wait until you come again to our castle." Then, with a little flush burning on each cheek, and in her eyes a light that half the men in the world would have fought through blood and fire to see for one moment, she walked with him to the carriage at the front door. There they parted, and Motier began to wish that Boggs would send him back to the palace.

Motier, his hands clasped behind his back and his eyes fixed upon the ground, slowly retraced his steps to the garden. His mind was centred upon Lucille, and he wished devoutly for the day to come when he and she could be together beneath the governor's roof. Nearing the bench which he had left to meet her, he raised his eyes. Captain Maynard, dressed in a tight-fitting uniform of blue and buff, stood watching his approach.

"Why, Captain," said Motier, taking the officer's hand, "you give me a pleasing surprise."

"I happened near here, Du Val," answered Maynard, as they sat upon the bench and lit a pair of black Spanish cigarros which the captain produced, "and thought to ask of your health; but Alice telling me you were here, I came back in time to see you and

your lady friend go through the gate. So I waited. How is the head?"

"As well as ever," answered Motier. Then, with a laugh, "I wish that infernal Boggs would let me move around more. What's going on in the world?"

Maynard looked at him with a questioning smile. "Well enough to hear some news?" he asked.

"The more the better," laughed Du Val.

"Has Tonta told you much about your accident?"

"All that he knows."

"Did he tell you who shot at you?"

"No," was the quick response. "Do you know?"

Maynard, behind a cloud of smoke, nodded his head. "Do you want to know?" he asked, quietly.

"If you value your life," Motier laughed, "tell me who the fellow was."

"Well, now," responded Maynard, with provoking slowness, "suppose I told you, what would you do? go to the magistrate and swear out a warrant?"

"Magistrate be hanged!" retorted Motier, with humor and spirit. "I had enough of the magistrate the day of the governor's review. He sent me to jail without a trial. No more magistrate for me!"

Maynard threw back his head and blew a pair of smoke-rings into the air. "What was your misconduct?" he asked.

"Dealing out summary punishment to a fellow named Cantwell."

"Oh! yes; Cantwell. I think I —"

"But, Captain!" protested Motier, impatiently. "I want my assailant's name."

"Why, certainly," said Maynard, brushing a speck

of ash from his coat. "We're talking about him now."

"Ah!" Du Val drew a long breath. "I might have known." Then he laughed softly to himself.

"Well," said Maynard, watching him with an amused but admiring smile. "What do you expect to do? ask him to apologize?"

Motier, with his elbows resting on his knees, was studying the end of his cigarro. "Captain," he said, looking up sidewise, "Jacob Cantwell is a fool."

"Yes?" answered Maynard, questioningly.

"He is also a swordsman," Du Val went on; "he must measure his blade with mine."

Maynard rose to his feet, one hand resting on Motier's shoulder. Du Val, throwing away his cigarro, stood up beside him Alike in height and breadth and carriage, the two represented an unusual type of physical perfection.

"Du Val," said the captain, with a hearty handshake, "you're a man after my own heart. I knew your answer a week ago."

"That's my ultimatum, Captain," was the response. "But," and he smiled a little as their eyes met again. "I am not a man after your own heart in all things."

"It may be well that you are not. Anything special?"

"Rather," said Motier; and reaching into his pocket he drew out the governor's commission. "Read that."

Maynard, taking the paper, read it through. Motier watched him closely; but not a muscle moved

in the captain's face. He handed back the sheet. "Irrevocable?" he asked, with a little smile.

"Irrevocable."

"Then do your duty: arrest me."

"You 're premature, my dear Captain. I'm not sworn in."

They looked into one another's eyes and both men laughed.

"In the future?" suggested Maynard.

"I will do what I am sworn to do."

"And if we meet — officially?"

"If I don't win, you will."

"And after the fighting?"

"If you haven't shot me, and if I haven't shot you, we'll settle the Cantwell affair."

"Now," said Maynard, with a perplexed smile, "I can't stop coming here, and you say Boggs won't set you free. When am I to know that you are a sworn officer?"

Motier looked down thoughtfully. "Well," he said, slowly. Then he looked up with a quick laugh. "If I meet you in the De Vere house after I am sworn, you'll find me very short-sighted."

"How?" asked Maynard, reaching out and taking Du Val's hand.

"I will not see you," was the reply.

With a firm pressure of the hand and a hasty "God bless you!" Maynard slipped into the bushes and was gone.

Motier, hearing a sound behind him, turned quickly. Down the gravel walk came Esther Wake and Governor Tryon.

CHAPTER XVI

The Story of Jack Ashburne

THE governor and his sister-in-law spent but a short time at the De Vere's, but Motier was with them till they left. The coming of Doctor Boggs made it possible for DuVal to promise the executive to return to the palace within two days, and Tryon assured him of an immediate assignment to active work in the preparation for the campaign against the Regulators. This gratified Motier, but his pleasure was not all in the anticipation of his work. He knew that the palace meant Lucille, and Lucille meant more to him than the inspection of stacks of guns and kegs of powder.

Miss Wake led Motier aside while De Vere and the governor debated a knotty problem in rose culture. "Motier," she said, in a low voice, "pray be careful in your association with Captain Maynard. All that saved you in the garden was a hawk that swooped across the path and attracted his Excellency's eye. Otherwise he would have caught you red-handed."

"I appreciate your spirit of kindliness," responded Motier, with a quiet dignity; "but my interview with Captain Maynard was not a clandestine one. Should occasion require, I would not hesitate to tell the governor of the matter."

"Don't misunderstand me, Motier," said Esther, reddening a little. "I do not mean to speak in criticism, or even to suggest that your meeting with the captain was a secret one. I only wish to show you that I am not unmindful of your interests. Governor Tryon, you know, is very bitter against Captain Maynard, and he might be unreasonable in anything bearing upon him."

"Have no concern, Miss Wake," said Motier, laughingly. "I will not involve myself with the enemy. Now, his Excellency seems to await you: let me lead you to the carriage."

Motier watched the cloud of dust that followed the governor's equipage. "Perhaps I am sailing close to the wind," he said to himself, as he turned and entered the house. "But I'll use my judgment and not the governor's."

The next day was cold and rainy. Motier and Alice, who had met at dinner the day before, spent the morning together in the drawing-room. Their conversation began when Alice, pausing a moment at the door, saw DuVal standing by the window. "Lonely, M'sieur Du Val?" she called.

He turned, smiling. "Until now," he said, bowing in the stately European manner. "Won't you come in and brighten me?"

"I wanted to talk with you before you left," she said, as they met in the middle of the room, "because you can tell me about France, where mother and father lived until after their marriage; and because you know so well the court life of which we Americans can only read."

They walked together to the window, and Alice sat in the wide window seat. Motier leaning his shoulder against the casing, stood close by her. "Of France," he said, "I can say naught but good — except it be of the government, which is extremely bad. Of the court life," he hesitated and looked down at her, "no one can speak without some reservation." Motier would have spoken more specifically to Lucille or to any other woman save this one; but Alice was new and strange to him, and something in her eyes made him guard his lips as they had never been guarded before. This sensation of constraint puzzled Motier. Hitherto his manner with women had been marked by a freedom which had won for him a considerable renown in the court of Louis of France. His bold heart and quick tongue had put to frequent silence every mistress of epigram and *bon mot* in the salons of the day; and Madame Du Barry, the king's favorite, had said upon more than one occasion that young Du Val was the only man in France who had no fear of woman. Yet, Madame had overshot the mark; for this same Du Val was now showing to Alice De Vere that respect which the women of the salons were wont to call timidity.

Alice gave little heed to her companion's conservative allusion to the court life. "I heard your father telling Lord Durham of many of your adventures in France," she said, looking up at him. "Did you really escape from prison and carry off one of the guards?"

Motier laughed. "Well," he said, with a little embarrassment, "I did something like that; but the

prison, you know, was a very frail sort of structure, and I pushed out the door with my knee."

"But the guard?" said Alice. "Didn't he try to kill you?"

"I don't know but that he did; but he was in my way, and it seemed safest to take him with me."

"But how did you do it?"

"Tied his hands and feet, stopped up his mouth and carried him on my shoulder. Really, Miss De Vere, the incident was a trivial one. The guard, too, was glad enough to come with me."

"And after that," said Alice, her eyes sparkling, "you and the guard became fast friends, and you two went to Calais, where you rescued a woman who was under arrest — "

"Who told you all this?" laughed Du Val, a little flush rising to his cheeks.

"Your father. But don't interrupt me, please. You rescued the woman, like those knights we read about — "

"But, Miss De Vere," broke in Du Val, protestingly, "father exaggerates these matters fearfully. The woman rescued herself, you see: we simply escorted her to the ship. Really," he added, as her eyes laughed into his, "she did it all."

"Why, Monsieur Du Val! You know that you heard the woman call from the carriage, and that you and your comrade threw the driver from his seat and galloped the horses to your ship. Then you fought Monsieur le Capitaine at the wharf and nearly killed him."

"Miss De Vere, you must not listen to all that

father tells you. He must have said these things the night you expected me to die. It is customary, I believe, to over-rate the past deeds of a dead or a half-dead man."

She met his objections with a toss of her golden curls. "It's all true," she said, firmly, "every word; for your father gave dates and all. But he ended the story with the sailing of the ship. What happened after that?"

"Nothing worth recalling. We sailed to Dover, where we left the poor woman — they had sent her husband to the Bastille, you know, and were carrying her to a chateau near Versailles. Then from Dover we went to Liverpool. We spent several months in England; then my friend the guard came to America. I have never seen him since."

Alice, twisting a ribbon about her fingers, looked thoughtfully at him. "But why did all this happen?" she asked. "Why did they put you into prison?"

"For what his Eminence, the Cardinal, called treason," responded Motier. "I had some notions and theories about civil rights and about the nonsense of the divinity of kings."

A pleased look came to Alice's face. "You were a patriot, then?"

"Perhaps," answered Motier, with a smile. "The Duke d'Aiguillon, however, called me by a different name."

"Tell me, what did he say?"

"As he passed me while the guards steered me prisonward, he raised his hat and called, 'M'sieur Du Val, I salute the greatest fool in France!'"

"How ill-bred!" exclaimed Alice. "Did you answer him?"

"Do you really care to know?"

"I really do."

"I said, 'If your Highness is a man of wisdom, I thank Heaven for having been born a fool!' Now," added Motier, hastily, "I am wrong to tell you all this: it sounds egotistical. Let us turn the conversation to our own day and our own land — for I call this my land now."

Alice lifted her eyebrows and shook her head. "Oh! no," she said, in a pleading tone, "don't change the topic yet. I think your answer to the duke was a good one; but — " She hesitated and looked sidewise through the window.

"But?" Motier repeated.

"I think you would have done better had you held your head high and passed by the duke without a word."

Motier looked down at her. "You have voiced the thought that has lingered in my mind ever since that day," he said, quietly. "I was wrong to answer him at all." And he remembered with somewhat of a start that Lucille had applauded the spirit of the very retort that Alice now deprecated. Yet he felt that Alice was in the right.

"If you were patriotic enough to go to jail rather than change your politics," asked Alice, "why have you been a royalist ever since?"

The question struck Motier on a weak spot in his armor. He could not say to her that he was a royalist because he had promised Lucille to be one, so he

answered as best he could. "Because," he said, evasively, "the government of Great Britain is far more liberal than that of France."

"Do you think that we in the colonies are well treated?" she asked, earnestly. "Don't you think the government too severe in its strictures?"

Motier shook his head. "No; I think that some few matters might be handled more considerately; but in general I think that the provinces have little cause for complaint. Under a ruler like Louis XV, for instance, you would hesitate to call life worth the living."

Alice looked out into the rain. She wanted to debate the condition of the colonies, but her spirit of hospitality overcame her patriotism.

She turned suddenly and saw that Motier's eyes were fixed curiously and questioningly upon her face. But she met the look with a smile, and changed the subject. "How do you like Captain Maynard?" she asked.

"As well as any man I ever met," he answered.

"We think him the best and bravest man in the world. You remind me in many ways of him. You are both tall and much alike in physique; then, too, you both have that way of laughing when you are angry."

"But you have never seen me angry."

"N-no," she answered, slowly, "but I know that you would laugh if you were. Then," she continued, "sometimes you look so like him that I can never think of you but as a sort of avenging Nemesis."

"Really," he said, with an amused smile, "you must

think me a terrible fellow. How do the captain and I suggest avengers of wrong?"

"Sometimes," she said, lowering her voice into seriousness, "Captain Maynard talks with father about some things which have happened in his life, and his eyes get so cold and so merciless that it makes me shiver to think of the day when he may meet the men who have wronged him. The same look came into your eyes when you said that you had never seen your friend the guardsman since he left you in England. If you ever meet him —"

"But I will never meet him, mon ami," answered Du Val. "He is too far away."

"But you may," persisted Alice. "You and he were good friends, were you not?"

"Yes," he answered, gravely, "the world has never seen another such as he."

"Was he tall, too, and strong, and did he laugh when he felt angry?"

"Come here by the fire, Miss De Vere," said Motier, drawing two chairs before the grate, "and if you wish I'll tell you of my friend the guardsman; but I can't promise to tell you why I never expect to meet him.

"My friend," he said, as they took their seats, "was an Englishman. He had left his regiment because — because his debts grew too burdensome." The excessive debts were in Du Val's imagination: the real cause was the love of a woman, but Motier evaded the truth, as he had once before, because he was afraid of the clear, pure look in Alice's eyes. "He left the country for the — the same reason. That was years

and years ago. I had seen him but once before I carried him away from the jail; but I took a fancy to him because he was all that you, in your question, asked if he was. He was tall and strong and he did 'laugh when he felt angry.'"

"I knew that," laughed Alice. "All brave men do that way."

"Yes, of course they do," assented Motier, "but it doesn't follow that all men who do that way are brave. Now, as you know, my friend of the guard crossed to Dover on the ship with me, and with the fugitive Frenchwoman. We left the lady to her own devices, and he and I played cards from the wharf at Calais to the landing in England. It was wicked, you will say, but we played for gold and I won all that he had and ran him into my debt for considerably more that he did not have. We spent some time around Liverpool, and my friend made a little money by teaching some peer of the realm to fence with the rapier. He then paid all that he owed me, and we struck northward toward the border.

"Somewhere near the line which divides England from Scotland we became involved in a petty uprising of some landlord's tenants. I was seized and locked up in a wagon-shed: my friend escaped. It being night my captors deemed it inadvisable to wake up 'my Lord' so-and-so, and I was kept in the shed with the expectation of being handed over to the authorities in the morning. My friend, however, biding his time, had stolen up to 'my Lord's' house, frightened some poor woman half to death, and with a bottle of wine, a broiled steak and an axe — with these things he

evaded a part of the plough-boy guard and came down to my lodging place. Some one shot at him, but he split the fellow's head with the axe, and, battering down the door, he let me out. After that we ran a mile or two through the woods, and then sat down to luncheon.

"Now this shows you what manner of man he was. I never knew a braver soldier than he; he was the truest friend that ever breathed; and his good-humor was unfailing. His companions in the old English regiment have told me that this man could laugh into the cannon's mouth, and sing songs into the faces of the men who went down before his sword, yet be as tender as a woman with a wounded comrade. After we cleared the borderland he saved my life four times, once from drowning, once from the explosion of a barrel of powder, and twice from the assaults of footpads. When we returned to Liverpool we met my father, who had left France in a more graceful manner than did his son. Here my friend of the guard found two solicitors waiting for him with a legacy of something like a hundred thousand pounds. If you guessed all your life you could never tell what he did with the money.

"First he squared up his old debts; then he gave a banquet to the English regiment that still called him theirs; after that he crossed over to France and without my knowledge purchased my pardon from the French government; he came back and hunting up the fugitive woman who had crossed with us from France, forced her to take — at the point of a pistol, he said — ten thousand pounds of his money and to go back to France for her husband, who, he told her, would be

free before she got there; and then my friend of the guard ended it all by eloping with a beautiful Lincolnshire girl and sailing for America. That is his story as I know it."

Alice's face was aglow with excitement. "And then," she said, "after he came to America — then what?"

"If I tell you that you will know why I can never meet him."

"But tell me," she said, impatiently. "You've left off at the most interesting point. What did your friend do when he came to America?"

Motier looked gravely into her eyes. "He took a pistol and blew out his brains," he answered, quietly.

Alice looked up quickly and half arose from her chair. "Oh! M'sieur Du Val, you — I had no idea what I asked. I hope — "

"You have done nothing," answered Motier, kindly. Then he smiled, a very slight smile and a very sad one, she thought. "The other woman was the one who did the mischief," he said.

"The one who came from England with him?"

"Yes."

"Who was she?"

Motier looked at her. "If I knew — " He stopped with a short laugh. In his eyes was the same merciless gleam that Alice had seen there once before.

They were silent for several minutes, Alice gazing thoughtfully into the fire, and Motier, his lips pressed firmly together, looking through and beyond the mantel into the days when his friend had lived.

At last Alice spoke. "One thing you have not told

me," she asked, softly. "What was the guardsman's name?"

"Lieutenant John Ashburne," he answered, turning his eyes upon her. Then, bending forward quickly, "Are you ill, Miss De Vere."

Alice was very pale. "No, no," she said, in an agitated voice. "But tell me, where — in what city did he live in America?"

"Charleston, in South Carolina."

Then Alice, remembering Maynard's words, knew that Lieutenant John Ashburne had shot himself because of Lucille Creighton. And Motier — she recalled the look that had come to his eyes as he said, "If I knew — "

"M'sieur Du Val," she said, faintly, "I think I do feel ill. Will you pardon me if I leave you?"

He led her to the door of her mother's room. Then, returning to the drawing-room, he stood again at the window. "Women are strange creatures," he muttered to himself, "but this is the strangest. What can she know of John Ashburne?" But his uppermost thought crept out in his next sentence. "If I knew who the woman was who forced that man to what he did, I would forget that she was a woman, and — " He shook his head. "No," he added, as he turned and flung himself into a chair, "that would be too good for her."

CHAPTER XVII

The Gift of the White Rose

MOTIER and Tonta spent the afternoon making ready for their departure on the morrow. Their conversation had been varied, its topics suggesting themselves from time to time as the two worked about the room.

After one of their silences, Motier, moving aside a chair, disclosed a bag lying upon the floor in one corner of the room. "Some of your plunder, Tonta?" he asked, lifting it up and laying it upon the table.

Tonta, polishing a boot, looked up from his work. "Tonta take 'em," he said, simply. "Caiheek take 'em back."

"You don't mean to say that you have played your old tricks here?"

"Me no help it: Bad Spirit take 'em. Tonta good — Caiheek take back."

Du Val, cutting the string that closed the mouth of the bag, emptied the contents onto the table. Such an assortment he had never seen: combs and brushes, cups, saucers, spoons, forks, books, jewelry, ribbons, and a score of other articles lay before Motier's astounded gaze. "Well," he said, when he had finished his inventory, "you've made a harvest this time. What's this book? Cullen's Lectures, eh? Good thing

for an Indian who cannot read. You stole this from Doctor Boggs: you should not have done that, Tonta. The doctor probably brought that book here to use in my illness: your taking it might have cost my life."

"Tonta take doctor book — Caiheek get well."

"No compliment that, to the doctor. I'll give this back to him. And these other things you must scatter about the house and trust to luck for their getting back to their owners. But this dagger? whose is this?" He picked up an exquisitely mounted dagger with a fantastic four-edged blade.

"Yawhauk try shoot Caiheek. Tonta find wee-woshonshee — this. Caiheek take him — find Yawhauk."

"You found this in the woods where the man shot at me?"

"Not close — long way."

Motier turned the dagger over in his hand. The side of the ivory hilt was set with five glittering emeralds. Between the stones were five slight marks on the ivory, seeming like the scratches of a like number of jewels on another handle. "A peculiar weapon," reflected Motier, "and one of a pair. I wonder if the other one will ever turn up. This goes into my satchel, for future reference."

He looked down again at Tonta's collection of trophies. "Now, Tonta," he said, picking up a small gold case, "you've gone rather far in this. Where did you — Ah! A miniature!" He had opened the case and was studying the features portrayed within it.

The picture held his gaze with something like fascination. Its subject was a mother and a child, the

latter a boy of perhaps two years of age. The woman's face was singularly beautiful, and Motier was struck with the rich harmony of the deep brown of her eyes and the raven blackness of her hair with the rose of her cheeks and the vivid blood-red of her lips.

"H'm!" he said, wonderingly. "I have never seen the woman, I can swear to that; but there's something wonderfully familiar in the face. Who is she, Tonta?"

"Wallannah," answered Tonta, reverently.

Something in the boy's manner attracted Motier's attention. "Wallannah?" he repeated, slowly. "And who is Wallannah?"

"Wallannah Manita, spirit — live Yaunocca — in mountain. Indian 'fraid Wallannah — love her."

"But this is a woman."

"No woman — Wallannah Manita."

"Manita," repeated Motier, in some perplexity. "I suppose that means some sort of goddess, doesn't it?"

"Caiheek say good."

"Then how did you get this picture?"

"Bobbasheelah — Cap'n."

"So you steal from Captain Maynard, do you?"

"Bad Spirit steal. Me hold Cap'n horse — see wassador in pocket — purty, like him snuffer-box. Bad Spirit take him. Caiheek take him back."

"Wallannah, then, is a friend of Captain Maynard?"

"Wallannah bobbasheelah Manita — save him Cap'n."

"Is the captain safe now?"

"Him safe — go last night see Wallannah."

Motier looked curiously into the copper-colored face. "Well," he said, with a mystified laugh, "I

suppose you know what you mean; but the whole affair goes a point beyond me. I'll take the picture and will return it to Captain Maynard if I ever see him again. Now, Tonta, finish cleaning my boots, then go down to the stables and rub down Fleetfoot. I'm going to play chess with Mr. De Vere."

The next morning was warm and clear, and Motier, after donning his riding suit, went down to the garden for a walk before breakfast. He found Alice there before him, plucking some hardy spring roses for the table.

They spent an hour together, talking a great deal about a very little, and walking as they talked, up one path and down another, until the breakfast bell rang.

Motier, master of his feelings though he was, could not account for his diffidence in this young woman's presence. Unconsciously, as she talked, he seemed lifted above himself. He recalled the freedom of his conversations with Lucille: he could imagine no situation which could lead him to talk in such a way to Alice. Yet, the girl was not a prude: he disdained the very thought. But something kept him at a distance. He could liken the feeling to but one other within the range of his whole experience, and that was the one which had come over him one night in Paris when one Le Brun, a swaggering braggadocio, had said in a café on the Rue de la Madeleine, "Drink some of this, Du Val; it is sacramental wine stolen from the Cathedral Notre Dame." Du Val had refused the glass with the same feeling at heart as was now inspired by this bit of a woman. Was it reverence? Motier looked at her as she bent over a rose-bush. Fair she was; gold

were dull beside such hair as hers, and alabaster would be coarse and muddy against her cheek. As she lifted her head, she looked up at him — for he was taller by far than she — and her eyes, blue and clear as an Alpine lake, met his. Was it reverence that he felt? He could call it nothing else. But someway the whole situation baffled his reason. Then, too, was the provoking consciousness that he was giving more thought to her than she gave to him. And why? He asked the question a score of times; but the answer would not come.

The two lingered in the dining-room after the others had left, Alice enthroned in her father's oaken chair at the head of the table, Motier sitting upon the arm of the chair next at her right. Their conversation had been more personal than at any time before, and Motier felt as he thought a man must feel when, battling with a whirlpool's current, he is drawn into the vortex. Yet, to carry out the metaphor, the whirlpool seemed an inverted one, not drawing him down, but lifting him up; and, as an inverted whirlpool is by necessity an anomaly, Du Val concluded that there was no whirlpool at all, but that some freak in the nature of man was doing its work within him.

Pure and sweet and lovely she looked as she sat there, robed in white, with a brooch of pearls at her throat and a white ribbon in her hair. Compared with Lucille this woman was cold and unbending, and he felt that her heart beat slowly and that reason was the dominant power within her.

"M'sieur Du Val," she said, after they had

exhausted the common topics of the hour, "bring me a rose from the vase."

"For you?" he asked, as he bent over the table.

She shook her head. "No," she answered. "This will be for you. I give it as a talisman," she added, with a touch of merriment. "Bring a yellow one."

"Yellow?" he asked, hesitating as he reached for the flower. "Yellow, you know, typifies jealousy and all such disagreeable things." And Lucille's amber silk came to his mind.

"Then yellow won't do," said Alice, with a quiet laugh. "Choose my color for me."

Motier's hand dropped to a rose of dainty white. "This is yours," he said, handing it to her; "the others do not suit."

She smiled a little. "Come closer," she said, taking a pin from her belt, "and let me fasten the flower to your coat."

He drew nearer to her and bending down met the laughing regard of her eyes. He steadied the lapel with his hand while she fastened the rose upon it. Her fingers touched his for a single instant, and he felt the color rise in his cheeks.

"There," she said, breaking off the surplus stem and leaves, "I have given you my colors. Rise, Sir Motier; henceforth you are my knight." She laughed as she spoke the words, but Motier felt a strange embarrassment; for he remembered the words, "my knight," as they had last fallen from Lucille's lips. Yet, the thought seemed discordant; why, he could not tell.

"They say," he said, rallying from his momentary

confusion, "that flowers have voices. I cannot hear this one, but I receive it as an emblem of purity and truth. And when it withers — "

"You may come and get another."

"But if I am too far away?"

"Why, then you — " She hesitated, and looked, with grave eyes, straight down the white-clothed table.

"Let me finish that," said Motier. "If I am too far away to come back, I will keep the dried-up flower; for a withered white rose is better, to my mind, than a fresh blood-red one." Devious were the ways before Motier; for Lucille wore a red rose five days in every seven.

Du Val looked at his watch. Two hours had crept by. "Ma foi, mon ami!" he said, his surprise forcing him to his native tongue. "I must be about my work: I leave at twelve."

"And must you go?" she asked, with a wistful ring in her voice.

"Yes; to my regret. The governor's orders, you see."

"The governor's orders?" she repeated, slowly. "Why does the governor give orders — to you?"

"Do you not know?" he asked, with some surprise. "I am a staff officer."

"You a staff officer!" she exclaimed, rising from her chair. "Why, M'sieur Du Val, I am astonished!"

"Astonished, Miss De Vere? and why?"

Her face wore a troubled look. "Because," she answered, with a little trace of resentment, " I thought from all that I had heard that you would remain neutral in this conflict. Captain Maynard, who has already

been much to you, is arrayed on the side of the Regulators; our sympathies are all with them; and — and I am sorry, M'sieur Du Val, that you have done this."

Motier looked down. The visions of martial glory which had been before his mind were scattered and dispelled by the words of this girl — the friend of but three short days. "I regret all these things of which you speak," he said, quietly, "but really, Miss De Vere," and he raised his eyes as he spoke, "the path of my duty was very plain before me: I could choose no other."

She was looking out through the window to the garden of the roses. He felt his heart sink as he watched her. "Are you fully committed to it?" she asked, after a painful silence.

"Entirely, Miss De Vere," he answered, remembering his promise to Lucille. "But I wish — "

She turned quickly. "What do you wish?" she asked, eagerly.

But he shook his head. "No," he answered, "I cannot say what I started to say. It would be treason to myself."

"I cannot ask you now," she said, looking again to the window. "You have promised, and that must end it. But I am very sorry." Her voice sounded cold and distant. "I will go to my room," she said, at length. "Good-bye, M'sieur Du Val."

Motier stepped beside her. "Can I not see you again before I go?" he asked.

She raised her eyes. "No," she answered, steadily. "It would not be for the best." And he heard the rustle of her skirts as she passed down the hall.

With a tinge of bitterness in his smile Motier stooped to the floor and picked up the rose which had fallen from his coat. It was crushed and torn and he knew that she had stepped upon it where it had lain. "John," he called to the footman, "take this flower to Miss De Vere: I think it is hers."

Du Val spent a busy afternoon with the governor and his secretary and Malcolm, the senior aide. Luncheon was brought to the four as they worked. Save only the secretary, they were in uniform, and Motier, overtopping them all, looked the soldier in every line. They accomplished much, and Du Val entered into the work with a zest that surprised him. Yet, when they dispersed at seven o'clock, Motier, with a quiet shrug, said to himself, "The white rose girl has spoiled some of the fun for me."

Motier went to his room after supper. He thought first to change his uniform for his customary black, but the governor's secretary sent word for him to attend a military council at ten o'clock.

Motier muttered something disrespectful. "A council at ten o'clock at night!" he said, with disgust. "He'll have more councils in the next three days than had Alexander when he conquered the world." But the ten o'clock council was not the thing that fretted DuVal. He had sent a valet to Lucille with a request for the evening with her, and from eight-fifteen to ten would be but half of the time he wanted.

The vague misgivings which had haunted him when Alice was near had left him when he stood once more within the palace. He looked forward to his meeting with Lucille with uncontrollable impatience.

Remembering her words in the garden at Beechwood, "Wait until you come again to our castle," he could hardly restrain the wild longing to go to her on the instant.

He lit his pipe and sat by the window smoking and waiting for Lucille's reply. After an interminable time the valet came to the door. Motier took the note from his hand. It began abruptly, "At eight-thirty, in the parlor in the upper suite. Yours ever, Lucille."

"Humph!" he growled. "Brief enough; and she has shaved fifteen minutes off my time, too." Then he looked down at the paper. On its back was a superscription which before had escaped his notice. "To my knight," it said, and the "my" was heavily underscored. Motier smiled, as he relit his pipe by the candle flame. "I seem to be several knights," he said, looking out into the darkness.

He stood at the window a long time, the smoke from his pipe floating into the room and curling about the candles in the sconce. Then his shoulders rose and fell with a sigh. "Queer," he said, knocking the ashes from his pipe, "but I can't drive Ashburne and the woman from my mind."

CHAPTER XVIII

A Temptation that Went Astray

THE upper parlor was a small room, but its furnishings, thanks to the exquisite taste of Esther Wake, were richer than those of any other apartment in the palace. The walls were profusely mirrored, and the beams from the multi-branched candelabra were reflected and counter-reflected until the room seemed ablaze with light. The floor was bare save where a few heavy rugs stood out brightly from their dark background. One of these was a tiger-skin, with mounted head and gleaming eyes, and it was on this that Lucille, in her gown of amber silk, stood waiting when DuVal entered the room.

"Well, my Lord," she said, with a mocking courtesy, "you have deigned at last to come to me."

"As you see, my Lady," responded Motier, crossing to her, "I am now a soldier, and must needs follow my duty and not my heart." Her hands were clasped as she stood there, and Motier, taking them both in one of his, drew her up to him and kissed her. "We are now in our castle," he said; "and I will see that I have my due."

"You were overpaid in that one kiss," she answered, following him to the seat in the alcove. "I must

hold you in reasonable bounds, Motier; else you would break from my control."

"Then affairs would be very sad, wouldn't they, Lucille?" he retorted, laughingly, as they sank back upon the silken cushions.

"Sad, or glad," she said, with a far-off look in her eyes. "There is a vast gulf between the two, and few can span it. But now," she said, with a quick change of mood, "tell me what you have said and done since I left you at Beechwood."

Motier, leaning back and turning his head so that Lucille's face was always before his eyes, told much and withheld much more of the things which had happened at the De Veres. Of Maynard he said nothing, of Alice scarcely more, but he painted with bold strokes the portraits of De Vere and his wife, and dwelt at length on Doctor Boggs and Mary Ross. When he was weary of this talk Motier asked her to account for her time during his absence.

"I have done nothing, Motier," she said, "but to eat and sleep and mingle with the governor's gatherings. Nearly all of my evenings have been lonely, so lonely that I wished a thousand times that I might saddle a horse and ride to Beechwood and — to you."

"You have missed me, then, chère?" he asked, slipping his hand over hers and holding it with a gentle pressure.

"Yes, Motier; I have missed you much; how much you cannot know."

"But I am here now; why are you — "

"Why am I so deep in my woes?" she said, filling out the sentence for him.

"Yes. why? You are not yourself to-night, ma belle. Why is it?"

"Because, Motier," and the eyes that turned to his were moist with tears, "I have a letter from father, and must leave by the ship to-morrow to meet him in Boston."

Motier bent forward. "In Boston? and so soon?" he asked, scanning her face as one looks at a beautiful picture. "Don't tell me, Lucille, that you must go to-morrow."

"To-morrow, dearest," she said, tenderly. "I would have let you know earlier, but I heard from father only this morning."

"But you will come back soon?" he asked, scarcely yet able to grasp the full significance of her words.

"Soon?" she repeated, dreamily. "I do not know: I may never come back."

"Never come back! You cannot mean that."

"It may be, Motier; until I reach there I shall know nothing of the future."

Motier, who was leaning slightly forward with his chin resting in his hand, was silent a long time, his eyes looking into vacancy.

"Are you not sorry?" she asked, with a painful little smile. He looked up with a quick move. "Sorry, Lucille?" he said, "I can find no words to tell you."

She trembled under his touch, and they looked at each other a moment, he as one whose mind is stupefied, she with eyes betraying the fire in her heart. With a soft word of endearment he reached and drew her to him.

"Motier," she sobbed, clutching his hand convulsively with both of hers; "I thought to have you all for myself when you came back. I watched for your return to me as I never thought I could for any man's coming. I had pictured all that you would be to me, and all that I would try to be to you: I did not know it would end like this!"

"Has it ended?" he asked. "If you do come back, you will find me here at my post of duty: if you stay there, when my work is done I will come to you."

She raised her head. "Do you love me enough for that?" she asked, a smile trembling through her tears.

"I love you more than all else in the wide, wide world. Wherever you may go, my love will take me."

"Even unto the world's end?"

"To the end of all, my queen."

With a rustle of her silken skirts she moved closer to him and her hands rested on his shoulders. She began speaking in a voice so soft and so sweet that Motier's reason, already overcome by the woman's maddening beauty, yielded to the wild wish to do anything, no matter what, that she might ask him. "Would you say to me, dearest," she asked, " 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'?"

"Yes," he answered, softly. Then, " 'Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.' "

"Then," she went on, "would you love me, comfort me, honor, and keep me in sickness and in health?"

"Yes, even unto death."

"Then," she said, running her soft fingers through the hair above his temple, "if you love me as you say, grant me one little boon."

"Anything you ask," he said, stroking her cheek with his hand.

A minute passed before she answered. He could feel her warm breath upon his cheek. He knew that her whole woman's soul was in the thoughts that surged through her brain. With a fierce, mad joy he felt that she was his; she, queenly and beautiful above all the women of the earth, with her grace and with her wondrous fascination, she was his, all his, to love and to cherish to their life's end. Yet she, who held him powerless in the bonds of their love, hesitated to ask him one more question.

He spoke again, "Ask what you will," he said, kissing her cheek, "and I will do it."

"Motier," she said, "it may be beyond your power to do what I ask. If it is, tell me; and — oh! Motier, it would break my heart!"

"What is it, dearest?" he asked.

She raised her head until she could see his face. He smiled as he had that night in the hallway by her door, tenderly, and with a great love in his eyes. "Will you go with me to-morrow?" she asked, softly. "Think of it, Motier; we would be on the ocean for days and days. You would be mine, and the court, the army and all the rest of the world would be so far away that we should forget all these things and live for each other. Will you go?"

A quick light leaped into his eyes, and the blood

in his veins seemed afire. "Do you realize what that would mean?" he asked, struggling to command his voice.

"I realize it all," she said, clasping her hands tightly before her. "But I love you, I cannot go without you! I give you my heart and my soul, Motier — everything — I give you everything, even life itself, if need be; and ask of you only that you come with me and love me." Her voice sank into a whisper, but such a tremulous, impassioned whisper had never before sounded in his ears.

Motier sat staring at the gleaming eyes of the tiger's head upon the floor. The boldness of Lucille's plan had made him speechless.

She watched him as a gamester watches the casting of the die. Her face was pale and the knot of ribbon on her corsage rose and fell in uncertain measure with the tumult that raged beneath it. She knew the forces that she had set to work in Motier's mind; she knew that on one side was duty and honor, and on the other love and — no, not that word! but love, and love only. She watched the fight until she felt that she had won the victory.

He rose to his feet, with one hand thrust into his bosom and the other tightly clinched behind him. His head was bowed and his face hard and set. As he walked slowly backward and forward under the light of the clustered candles, Lucille knew that she had won him, and the thought made her brain whirl. Esther's guitar lay at the end of the divan; and, scarcely thinking what she did, Lucille picked it up and ran her fingers across the strings. Motier still paced the floor,

but a new look came into his eyes at the sound of the music.

Bending forward so that the light fell upon her face she began playing, very softly, a Spanish air, slow and sensuous, like a siren's witching song. A smile was on her lips as she struck the closing chords; then, watching Motier's face as he turned toward her in his walking, she swung into one of those melodies that Satan wrings from a composer's soul for the tempting of man when all else, women, wine, and the odor of incense do not avail.

Motier stopped short in the middle of the tiger-skin. He raised his head quickly, and Lucille caught a gleam in his eyes that frightened her. Her fingers wavered and struck a harsh discord and the music ceased abruptly. Motier walked slowly toward her. Wondering, she kept her eyes fixed upon his face. A chair stood in front of her; and Motier, resting his hands upon its back, stood looking into her eyes.

She laughed nervously. "Why do you look so strangely, Motier?" she asked, forcing a smile to her lips.

"I am thinking," he answered in a cold, strained voice, "whether or not I should kill you."

She gave a little start. "Why Motier," she cried, the color leaving her cheeks, "you—you talk as though you were going mad."

"No, I am not going mad. I have just learned that I have been mad for a long time."

"But, Motier, I cannot understand you. Why do you look so? What has happened?"

"You started to play something a moment ago," he said, slowly, with emphasis on every word; "but you stopped before you finished. You learned that little song from John Ashburne."

"John Ashburne!" The guitar fell to the floor and lay there, its strings vibrating in discord. "What do you know of John Ashburne?"

"I am the one — "

With a low anguished cry she rose and staggered toward him. "Oh! Motier," she cried, standing in front of him, her hands pressed tightly over the bow on her corsage. "You are — you are — " But she went no further.

"I am," he answered, with a queer, hard ring in his voice. "And what is more," he continued, slowly, "I have sometimes thought that I would do the world a kindness to kill the woman who ruined Jack's life. I knew him better than you did, and I say to you now that a nobler man never lived. As to the woman who drove him to his death, I can say only that she was true to nothing on earth nor in heaven. Has she any words to justify herself?"

She did not answer, but wavering a moment, sank upon one knee and raised her terror-stricken face to his. "Motier! Don't kill me! I did not know that you were his friend; and I love you so — "

He interrupted her with a grating laugh. "Stand up," he said, harshly. "For the sake of what you have been to me, I will do you no harm. I can only thank God that you played that opening chord before I came to you to say yes. For now that all is over I will admit that I had resolved to go with you, to throw

"Oh! Motier," she cried, standing in front of him.

away for you honor, self-respect, and all else that a man holds dear."

Staring at him with a look of agonized appeal in her eyes she leaned against the table for support.

He spoke with evident effort. "I scarcely know what to say to you," he said. "Until to-night I thought you all that a true-hearted woman should be. But now, knowing that your heartlessness and duplicity brought Jack to his death, harsh though the words may seem, I cannot even call you friend."

She lowered her eyes to the floor, and drew in a sharp, quivering breath. "Motier, don't talk like that," she pleaded; "can't you see that I cannot bear it!"

He was unmoved.

"You deceived Jack," he went on, giving no heed to her interruption; "and you have deceived me. Could anything make me believe that you would accord me better treatment than you did him? Were I to join my life with yours, could I forget that you once loved another man as you now love me? and could I forget what turned that man's love-dream to a depth of misery that your own soul could never measure?"

He waited for an answer.

She stood still, her eyes fixed on the floor. "Motier," she said, in a choked voice, "I know all that happened in that old life. But I have left it all behind me. And it — it was not what the world thinks it was. Were Jack alive now, he would tell you. But we — we did not understand each other. That was all. I never dreamed that he would kill himself. He may have suffered; but I never knew it. I saw him sometimes after our separation, and he looked cheerful, and even

happy, almost to the last day. I did not know: I — I thought that he didn't care. Even when they told me he was dead, I could not believe that I was to blame. But truly, Motier, he misunderstood. The only wrong I ever did him was to marry him before I learned the meaning of love. There was no one else: God is my witness! But he — O Heaven! I do not know what he thought!"

The glitter still lurked in Motier's eyes; but his voice was quiet, and even tender.

"I am glad that you have told me this," he said, "yet, candidly, Lucille, it does not leave you blameless. There is still much which you cannot deny. You repeatedly dined with men whom Jack had forbidden you to entertain. You surrounded yourself with a coterie of young lovers, and defied Jack to put a stop to your flirtations with them. Can you deny this?"

Coming from Motier's lips, and in his cold, even tones, her arraignment had been a terrible one. Before he had finished she was sobbing convulsively. He watched her for a long time; and, as he watched, the look in his eyes softened. He bit his lip and looked away from her. After a moment he turned again.

"Lucille," he said, kindly.

Her woman's ear caught the tremor in his voice, and she looked quickly up at him.

Outwardly he was very calm.

"I have had but two loves in my life," he said, leaving the chair and moving toward her. "One was my love for the friend who was all to me that one man can be to another. The other love was my love for you. I can say but one thing now. I will leave your

treatment of Jack in the hands of One whose place it is to judge; I will overlook the deception you have practiced on me; I will try to forget the proposition you have made to me to-night. I will do all of this for the sake of the love which has bound us together. For the future I hold forth a friendship that is yours always and whenever you may need it. Half an hour ago, when you played Jack Ashburne's love song, I could not have said this; but now that I know you better, I cannot part from you as I would have left you then."

He turned away from her and walked toward the middle of the room. His face was drawn and pale, and his eyes were heavy with the weariness of his inward struggle.

Slowly, very slowly, Lucille raised her head. Her eyes, seeking Motier's face, met his, fixed upon her calmly and without a sign of anger. With quick instinct she saw in his eyes something of the look of the old days.

"Motier," she faltered.

"Yes?" he answered.

"You are going away from me?"

"Yes, Lucille; I can do nothing else."

"Oh! Motier, you cannot — " Her words broke off in a sob.

He drew nearer. "I did not hear you," he said gently.

She made a step toward him. Her hands were clasped tightly before her, and her breath was agitated. Always beautiful in Motier's eyes, she now seemed lovelier than man ever dreamed that woman could be.

"Don't leave me, Motier!" she pleaded, with a pitiful little break in her voice. "If you go away what will be left for me? I love you, darling! love you more than I ever could have loved Jack. You're all that I have to live for. Keep me here, Motier! Keep me with you! If you ask it, I'll not go to Boston. Only tell me that you want me, and I'll stay here with you. Motier, I beg of you, don't leave me!"

He seemed to hesitate before answering. His eyes were looking far beyond her, and he saw nothing save what was in his mind's eye of her in the other days. But when he spoke, his voice was firm and quiet.

"After all that I have told you," he said, "you know what my answer must be. We have indulged our madness long enough. I must go."

"But Motier, you will come back!"

He shook his head. "As a friend I may, if you need me. Otherwise, never."

She opened her lips to speak, moved them with an inarticulate word, then flung herself sobbing into his arms.

Almost roughly he tried to free himself from her. But she clung the more closely to him.

"Motier!" she cried, "don't tell me that: you cannot mean it!" Then she raised her head and looked into his face. "I cannot let you go," she said, in a low voice. "If you have even a spark of the old love in your heart, keep me with you. Let the things you have heard lie in the ashes of the past. You loved me once, you can love me again; and I — oh! darling, I cannot live without you!" She was talking rapidly and with feverish excitement, but her voice and her eyes and all

her wondrous beauty were fast throwing the spell of their fascination about Motier. "You know how you loved me," she went on; "and you know how we used to talk of the days to come, when we should be together, you and I, and away from all the rest of the world. Have you forgotten those words of yours? Have you forgotten everything that made those days so happy? Tell me, darling, have you forgotten all?"

Motier's hand trembled as with an effort he unbound the arms that were clasped about him. How easy would it have been to give up the fight! His senses were whirling with the mad joy of that last embrace. The room, the mirrors and the lights seemed to sway about him, then to fade away in a confused glamor. For Lucille, fairer than ever, had been in his arms, pleading for his love. He felt in that moment as though all in life was centered about her. Her upturned face was close to his; and a terrible force seemed impelling him to clasp her closer to him, to cover her face with kisses, and to yield all that he had won in the last fierce burst of the flames that still flickered above the ruins of the old love.

But even then he remembered the gulf that his manhood had placed between them.

"It is useless — useless," he said, hoarsely. "I am going, for your sake as much as for mine. God knows I wish there might be another way out of it; but there is not. It is best — I cannot stay now."

"But Motier —"

"Yes?"

"Have you no heart to —"

"Lucille!"

There was no mistaking the meaning of his tone nor of his look.

Tears were in her eyes, but she smiled bravely through them, a pitiful smile, with lips all a-tremble, that went deeper into Motier's heart than any words could have gone.

"If you are going," she said, holding out her hand to him, "good night — and good-bye!"

He took her hand and held it for a brief moment. "Good-bye," he said, huskily.

Then he turned and left her standing there. At the door he stopped and looked back. He saw, standing upon the tawny tiger-skin, a figure in amber silk, a pair of bare white shoulders shaking with grief, a bowed head crowned with a wealth of dark hair, and beyond her, on the floor, the guitar that had quivered with Jack Ashburne's love song. A wave of regret passed over him as he thought of all that this lovely woman had been to him in the days that were gone. He hesitated a moment and made a step toward her. But Ashburne's face seemed to come before him, and Ashburne's voice seemed to sound in his ears.

With the old merciless gleam in his eyes, he turned and went down the stairs to the governor's council of war.

CHAPTER XIX

Men-at-Arms a-Marching

MOTIER DU VAL had long been an admirer of William Tryon. As a guest in the palace the young Frenchman had met with naught but courtesy at the governor's hands; and a warm friendship had sprung up between the two. It was this feeling which had led Du Val to accept as an honor his appointment on the executive's military staff. But that was before he learned that Tryon was a two-sided man, and that one of his sides was not good to look upon. This last fact was borne in upon Motier by slow degrees, yet with convincing force, when Tryon the statesman merged into Tryon the soldier.

Du Val's revised opinion of his Excellency had its birth in the ten o'clock council on the night that he left Lucille in the upper parlor. The session was a long one. Motier, whose even temperament allowed him to look with peculiar coolness into problems of intrigue and of war, felt considerable surprise at the frequent eruptions of Tryon's temper. To Motier's mind the governor looked hotly upon matters which required extreme discretion, and gave but scant heed to the minor questions which should always enter into the least calculations of a man of judgment. Motier's acquaintance with the soldiers of France was a wide

one, and generals and marshals of world-wide repute had been among the young man's closest associates. He could look upon Tryon and see that this man was not a true soldier. Conceding that the governor possessed courage and indomitable force, it still left him without the higher qualifications that every soldier regards as his noblesse oblige. Of honor he had little; and of the judgment that puts statecraft and diplomacy before the rule of the sword he had none.

Du Val, leaning back in his chair within the little red-coated circle that made a dash of color in the gloom of the Hall of Audience, watched his superior officer from beneath half-closed eyelids. He saw Tryon swayed from one point to another by vindictive hatred of his foemen; and against this hatred argument availed nothing. The governor's sole thought was fight. Motier, with something approaching scorn, saw that the rights of the people, the blood and the homes of patriots, and the lives of the royal soldiery had no part in the consideration of the issue at hand. Tryon said, "These fellows are rebels, their views and their acts are treason;" which made an excellent cloak for the governor's personal animosities and seemed a brave excuse for his own self-glorification. But Motier had allied himself with the governor, and his knowledge of the man's character had come too late. Unable to turn back, he had but to follow his chieftain whither he went.

On the twenty-fourth day of April Governor Tryon, with three hundred men at his back, began his march from New Bern to the camp of the Regulators, nearly two hundred miles to the northwest. Small though his

force, Tryon went forth like a leader of invincible legions.

Some of the spirit of the thing infused itself into Motier's blood as he sat upon his horse close beside Doctor Boggs (who was now staff surgeon), and watched the fluttering banners, the foam-flecked horses, the gleaming lines of scarlet coats and the rythmic swing of booted legs, and back of that the dull grey and brown of the ununiformed militia. He heard the screech and rattle and boom of the drum corps. His ear caught the "clump, clump, clump" of the feet of marching men. The air was filled with the murmuring and the shouting of the people and the quick, sharp ring of officers' commands. And, after it all, came the surly rumble of cannon and caisson. In his throat was the choking of the rising dust, and his nostrils opened to welcome the scent of musty uniforms, the smell of leathern trappings and the odor of the stables that still clung to the horses. These carried him back to the days when he and Ashburne had mingled with Jack's old English regiment; and those were good days to remember.

The governor and his staff swung into their places; the glitter and the glare and the sounds and the smells seemed brighter and clearer and closer; the men turned their faces to the west and with a crashing salute from the cannon the little army started for the front.

For days and nights and nights and days did they march and encamp, decamp and march again, over roads and through forests, by river and by brook; and, as they marched, others came to swell their ranks. Sometimes the army, emerging from a dense wood,

came face to face with a motley company of volunteers cheering and waving their caps. Again some quick-eyed woodsman would see afar the glimmer of arms and the cloud of dust that overhung some detachment approaching in the distance. Thus came the reinforcements from the counties Craven and Carteret, from Dobbs and from New Hanover, from Johnson and from Onslow and from Wake; and the cheers were loud and long when Bullock dashed among them with his company of light horse, when Neale swung into line with his band of sturdy riflemen, and when Moore toiled into the column with his little battery of artillery.

There were men within the ranks whom Motier knew well before the three weeks' march was over. Officers were there who fought beneath the governor's standard because they thought Tryon a man of honor. He had told how he abhorred the shedding of blood; that his purpose was but to make a show of force to intimidate the rebels; that he would negotiate for peace until peace was assured or found impossible; and that not until reason and persuasion were worn to the bare bone would a grain of powder be burned. So it was that brother marched against brother, father against son, son against father; for they were honest and true and knew nothing of their leader's guile. But Motier did know; for he had seen the skeleton that grim and soulless stood within that outer man.

Du Val and Doctor Boggs, being tent-mates, were much together; and as the masters, so were the servants. Boggs had with him the gaunt son of a Gold Coast chieftain, who, seventeen years before, had fallen

with the burning stairs in the Maynard house. Motier was attended by a hideous apparition mounted on a speckled pony. The pony was Tonta's, the servant's figure was Tonta's, and so were the keen eyes and the well-cut features; but the color of the face was scarlet and black, and the style of the garments was the picturesque mode of savagery. More than this, the only name that brought its response was Oocheecha. For Tonta was in war-paint, and with it were his warrior's garb and title. This was because a war was on foot, and furthermore because he knew that Captain Neale could never forget the face of the boy who, but a few weeks before, had helped deliver him into Maynard's hands. Motier, understanding this, preferred the ridicule of his attendant's unique appearance to having the faithful fellow driven away or hanged.

But the ways of Tonta and the ways of Oocheecha were one and the same, and the Indian's favorite hunting ground was the outfit of the doctor's negro, Quack. This ebon worthy rode a horse whose grandsire and granddam came from Europe with Graafenreidt in 1709. He was the oldest horse in the Carolinas, and his legs bowed outward when he walked and inward when he stood. Yet Quack thought him a Bucephalus, and every inch of leather upon him bore a gaudy tassel or tag. The saddle was fringed with deerskin thongs, and from these swung the tinware of the doctor's camp-equipment.

Quack's horse-regalia struck Oocheecha's eye as soon as it loomed into view, and day by day the shadow of the spectacle grew less, until Quack arose in a

mighty wrath and the sounds of that wrath smote upon the governor's ears.

Boggs and Motier and even Quack himself tried to stay the gubernatorial edict; but their words were as raindrops 'gainst the wind. Oocheecha stole out in the darkness of night and with him went Quack's ruffled shirt-front, untied from its owner's bosom while dreams enchained his fancy.

Motier and Tonta met but once more during the march, and that was on the third night after the Indian's escape from the camp. This happened in the forest by the side of a spring that Motier had found the night before.

Tonta, coming as from the depths of the earth, stood before Du Val as he rose from drinking the clear water. "Sequa want see Caiheek," he said, briefly.

"Who is Sequa?" asked Motier.

"Sequa daughter Tetah — Tonta mother."

"Where is your mother?"

"Sequa here," came a soft voice behind him.

Motier turned. An Indian woman, tastefully dressed in a short-fringed skirt and wearing beaded leggings and moccasins, stood upon a fallen tree close at his elbow. About her shoulders was thrown a red shawl, and her long black hair fell from beneath a little spangled cap of scarlet satin.

"Tonta's Caiheek?" she asked, musically.

"I am," answered Du Val, looking into her handsome bronzed face. "What do you wish?"

Her English was better than Tonta's, and she smiled as she talked. "Tonta's Caiheek help Tonta," she said, stepping down from the log and moving

closer to Motier. "Now Sequa help Tonta's Caiheek. You go to big hills. Indian in big hills hate governor — kill you for governor's friend. Indian on war-path, but Sequa help you. Take this," she added, holding out a bracelet of beads joined by a silver star, "for Sequa love Caiheek. Show star to Tetah — big chief. Tetah see star and know Caiheek friend of Tonta, friend of Sequa. Save Caiheek, and Sequa glad."

Motier took the bracelet in his hand and fumbled awkwardly with the clasp.

With a little laugh Sequa took it from him. "Sequa put it on," she said. She took his hand and unbottoning his sleeve fastened the circlet about his wrist. As she did so he noticed that her hands were small and well-kept and that her arm, bare to the elbow, was soft and shapely.

Before she left, Sequa bent her head to Motier's ear. "Sequa know Caiheek better than Caiheek guess," she whispered. "Some day Sequa come to Caiheek, and Caiheek know why Sequa love him." With another low laugh and with a smile over her shoulder the Indian woman darted into the bushes and was gone.

Motier turned to Tonta. "Your mother is a very handsome woman," he said. "How does she keep her beauty?"

"Sequa Indian," was the quick response, "but Sequa got friends. Sequa rich." And Tonta seemed proud of his mother's distinction.

Indeed, as Motier afterward learned, the woman Sequa, whom her own people called the beautiful, had held in the grasp of her little hand the fates of some whose places were high in the world's esteem.

At the river Enoe the governor's forces were increased by a motley crowd of ex-officials from Hillsborough. At their head was Colonel Fanning, the despised of the people. Even Tryon, who kept the man for the uses to which he put him, liked him as little as did any one else.

Hoping to control for a favorite of his own the election of Husband's successor in the legislature, the governor had planned to spend several days in the camp on the Enoe, within easy reach of Hillsborough. But a courier dashed into camp one day with intelligence of the capture of the governor's powder train, en route from Charleston. Close upon this news came the report that the Regulators were assembled in great force a few miles ahead of them. Therefore, Tryon made haste to change his plans. Breaking camp the next morning the army marched from the Enoe, and crossing the Haw encamped upon its farther bank.

On the next day Motier began to see more clearly the brutal determination of Tryon. The two were together in the commander's tent when a messenger brought a petition from the Regulators, who were in camp but a short distance in front. Tryon read the communication, and with a short laugh threw it to Motier. The governor turned to the messenger. "I will answer that at noon to-morrow," he said, curtly. And that was the end of that appeal. Motier read it through. It prayed for redress of certain grievances, expressing a willingness to disperse peaceably if their prayer were granted, but making the firm stand that only by this course could the governor avert bloodshed. To Motier's mind the petition was a fair one, and

certain propositions within it were worthy of consideration. But Tryon, after his dismissal of the messenger, left his tent, humming a popular song, which he interrupted to pester Captain Moore with some irrelevant questions about the range of his artillery. Motier knew well enough what Tryon's answer would be; and choking down his disgust he left the governor's tent and went to his own.

Boggs, sitting on the ground with his back against an empty box, was smoking a pipe and playing with a kitten that Quack had abducted from some farm-house along the line of march.

The doctor looked up as Motier entered. "I'm playing with William Tryon," he said, gravely. Then, to the kitten, "William, show the gentleman your pretty tricks." The doctor began rubbing the feline's back. "That's right, William; you're a fine fellow. Purr away: then tell us how nice we are and how good and noble you are. There, that's a dutiful William."

Motier laughed at the absurd tableau; but the doctor's face was the picture of gravity. "Now, William," he said, a little sternly, "I'm tired of rubbing your back: suppose we shake hands and call each other good friends."

Boggs held out his hand. Quick as a flash the kitten's paw shot forward and its claws sank in the doctor's palm, drawing three tiny drops of blood.

Boggs looked up. "That is William Tryon," he said, dryly. "Give him what he wants, and he purrs. Assert your own rights and he strikes for blood."

And the doctor had a very fair knowledge of human character.

CHAPTER XX

The Battle of the Alamance

AT dawn of the sixteenth of May the royal troops moved forward. Their tents were left standing, and the baggage wagons, with horses in harness, remained, suitably guarded, on the camping ground. The march was made in quick time and without music. Skirmishers were thrown out to protect the way, but the advance met with no opposition. The troops reached a point five miles to the westward of the Great Alamance on the road from Hillsborough to Salisbury; and the governor, mindful of the things printed in his book of tactics, sent markers to the right and to the left to lay out the points of the line of battle. Then the companies, wheeling and crossing obliquely to their several positions, formed with the artillery in the centre.

Opposite the forces of the crown and but a half-mile from them were the Regulators, drawn up in a ragged single line, without semblance of military formation.

Thus the two armies stood at ease. The governor counted in his lines eleven hundred men well armed and equipped. The patriots' strength was in numbers only; for their two thousand men, confident of a peaceful outcome of the trouble, were half of them

unarmed, and of the other half few had more than enough powder and lead to carry a man through an hour's squirrel hunt.

Through the morning numerous peacemakers crossed and recrossed the space between the lines. Of these the most active was Doctor Caldwell, a greatly beloved minister of the gospel, who visited the governor no less than four times before the battle.

At one of their interviews Tryon, resting his hand affectionately upon the other's shoulder, said, "My good Doctor, I am as anxious as you to avert the shedding of blood. We have troublesome and seditious adversaries, but I promise you not to fire upon them until I have fairly exhausted negotiation in the effort to reach an amicable adjustment."

Yet, as the worthy ecclesiastic hastened away, the governor, sitting upon his horse, scanned the line of the enemy with his glass. "If we concentrate our fire on their centre," he muttered, "we may be able to cut them in two and drive their right wing off from the woods. That would give us victory in half an hour." Thus did Tryon seek peace.

An hour before noon Doctor Caldwell returned once more on his mission. With him was Robert Thompson, a man well regarded for upright character, and unarmed and neutral, striving only to avert the impending crisis.

The governor received Caldwell coolly. "I have replied to the ridiculous petition of these people," he said, "and, after reminding them that I had always done my duty toward them, and had already gone further than was due to meet their wishes, I told them

that unconditional surrender is the only thing I can consider. They must submit within the hour, promise to pay their taxes, and return to their homes; giving us assurance that they will interfere no more with our courts of justice. I can say nothing more to you than I have said to them."

The governor, after Caldwell's departure, began pacing backward and forward before his lines. Motier and his fellow-aides, Malcolm and Hawkins, sat upon their horses near at hand. The royal troops still stood at rest; and across the field the Regulators, many of their younger men wrestling and enjoying various other athletic sports, awaited the decision that would settle the destiny of their cause.

A messenger approached the governor with the Regulators' reply to his ultimatum. "They answer," the horseman said, "that they cannot accept your proposition. Claiming that your message is a threat, they defy your arms, and declare that if your reply is conclusive their only recourse is battle."

Tryon, smiling grimly, dispatched a magistrate and one of his staff officers with a proclamation commanding the rebels to disperse. The governor, watching the enemy's line, saw the confusion which resulted when the royal emissaries arrived. The boys in the ranks stopped their playing; the long thin line became a writhing human serpent, darkly marked on the green of the meadow; and with shouts and gestures of anger and menace the Regulators began surging forward.

Tryon turned to his aides. "Hawkins," he cried, as he mounted his horse, "ride over and tell those

people that unless they deliver to us, at once, Husbands, Hunter and Howell and such others as we have before indicated, and unless they disperse immediately, we will fire upon them."

Hawkins galloped across the field. The Regulators, advancing, met him near the middle of the field. The derisive shouts which greeted the governor's message were plainly heard by the knot of officers surrounding Tryon. In a few moments Hawkins, with red face and firm-set lips, returned.

"Their answer?" asked Tryon, with some eagerness.

Hawkins pulled at his mustache. Something like a smile came to his eyes. "'Fire, and be damned!'" he replied.

The governor's jaws shut closely together. Then he gave a short laugh. "H'm! Polite enough, I should say."

In the pause that followed, the peacemaker Thompson endeavored to recross to the line of the Regulators.

"Stop that man!" called Tryon, angrily.

Thompson halted voluntarily and raised his honest face to the governor's frowning visage. "If your Excellency insists," he said, respectfully, "I must stay; but I came peaceably into your ranks, and I think I can justly claim the right to make a peaceable return." He moved again toward the ranks of the patriots.

With a savage oath Tryon, bending over his saddle bow, tore a musket from the hands of one of his men. "By God! you won't go!" he cried, hotly. And he fired point-blank into the fearless, upturned face. Thompson threw up his hands, staggered backward

and sank to the ground. A great shout of rage came from the Regulators. Tryon, paling at the realization of his own murderous act, reined in his rearing horse "Send out a truce!" he cried, hoarsely.

A white flag fluttered in the breeze. A chorus of scornful yells floated across the field. Then, hesitatingly at first, but with final decisiveness, the patriots levelled their rifles. The flag was dropped to the ground.

Tryon, spurring his horse, dashed down the front of his army. "Fire!" he commanded. "In the king's name, fire upon those rebels!" The soldiers looked at each other with an uncertainty that for the moment brought dismay to Tryon's heart. The governor rose in his stirrups and waved his sword with furious energy. "Fire!" he yelled, his face purple with rage. "Fire on them or fire on me!"

Then, with a few scattering shots, the volley began. In a moment, with a crashing crescendo, the army poured its lead into the ranks of the Regulators.

The answer came back with the echo. The smoke from the two sides rolled out and swept toward the centre of the field. For a few moments the governor's regulars kept to their volleys. The royal militia and the Regulators, firing at will, kept up a fitful popping. Then, with a crashing roar, a double flash of red gleamed through the sulphurous clouds, the white smoke opened in two narrow lanes, then sucked in behind the iron messengers that swept across the field. The six-pounders had begun their work. After them came the crack! crack! rip! rip! of the tiny swivels, and

through and above them all sounded the rising and falling of the angry growl of musketry.

Within ten minutes neither side could see the other, and their only guides were the lurid flashes that broke through the billowy clouds of smoke. Once a gust of wind swept across the field and drove the smoke scurrying over the grass. Then it was that Tryon saw that his foes were drawing nearer.

The governor, smarting with the fear of defeat, commanded, "Cease firing!" and sent out another white flag. Its effect upon the Regulators was barely noticeable. Again the racking chorus of cannon and swivel shook the air, and the musketry resumed its deafening roll.

Tryon, riding up and down before his lines, saw that the enemy's riflemen were playing havoc with the artillery. He turned to Motier. "Tell Moore to dislodge those fellows from that ledge of rocks," he called.

Du Val galloped down the line to its centre. Dead and wounded men lay about the cannon in little blood-streaked piles. Grimy men with bare arms blackened and faces gleaming with a hellish fury, sponged and loaded and primed the guns. Captain Moore, his uniform torn to shreds, looked up.

"Dislodge the men behind the ledge," called Motier.

"Dislodge the devil!" came the answer. "They'll clean us out first." But the quick smile that followed his words softened their disrespect.

The guns were swung about and sighted on the rocks, and a roaring field-piece crouched deep into the earth with the drive of its recoil. The smoke cleared

away. The rifleman Pugh, undismayed, was firing with cool and careful aim while the three men about him loaded his rifles. Motier turned away. As he started back a bullet ripped off one of his epaulettes and sent the glittering bauble hurtling through the air. The Frenchman smiled, and a cheer came from the men behind him.

The fight grew hotter. Bullets shrieked and whistled about them, little puffs of dust sprang up from the ground in a thousand unexpected places, and now and then a shout or a groan would turn Motier's eyes toward some staggering man with a bloody face mashed and torn beyond all human semblance, or with a hand pressed over a spot on his uniform and a little dark stream oozing between his fingers. And with each of these sights of blood Du Val muttered under his breath, "Score one more for Tryon's vainglory."

Slowly the royal troops fell back — ten — twenty —fifty—a hundred yards. Tryon raged in ungoverned fury. Motier and his brother-aides dashed hither and yonder with orders that sounded bold and brave, but meant nothing at all.

"Tell Moore to train his artillery on their right wing," shouted Tryon.

Motier and Malcolm rushed down the line and reached the centre in bare time to meet the gunners in retreat, with a howling swarm of Regulators possessing the cannon. Motier escaped his foemen's rush by a quick turn and a hasty bit of sword-play. Malcolm fell from his horse and ran for his life, leaving half his clothing in the hands of Witten, the hunter.

The Regulators kept the cannon as long as they

held the field. Having no ammunition to fit them, and knowing nothing of the beautiful theory of spiking guns, their only safety was in keeping the pieces out of Tryon's hands. This they did, and the governor's men were glad of it. Pugh, from his rocky fortress, had killed and wounded sixteen of the royal artillerymen; and the few who remained had no stomach for the sort of fate that had come to their companions. Tryon and his staff knew that those sixteen men had been uselessly sacrificed; for the enemy had taken to fighting from the woods, and the heavy shot did little but sink into tree trunks and break the branches and limbs into firewood.

At last, when the governor almost despaired of victory, and his troops were fighting like men in their last hour, the fire of the Regulators began to lessen in intensity. A puff of wind crossed the field and sent the smoke bellying toward the woods. The enemy's forces were half gone, and scores of black figures darted in and out among the trees in hasty retreat. Their ammunition had failed when victory was within their grasp.

Tryon pressed his men forward. A few hundred Regulators still kept up a desultory fire, and every puff of smoke meant a hole in a red jacket or a rip in a horse's hide. The royal troops advanced, and Tryon, his eyes sparkling and his hands nervously fingering his sword-hilt, took the lead. "A glorious victory," he said, as Motier and Hawkins swung in beside him. "We'll capture them all."

But his Excellency was disappointed; for, at their enemy's approach, the Regulators broke ranks and

scattered into the woods. Tryon's victorious charge for a mile through the forest yielded but fifteen prisoners, a few badly foundered horses, and a small quantity of abandoned stores. Thus after two hours of fighting did the king's provincial troops win the battle of the Alamance.

What Tryon thought of his achievement can best be judged by the opening words of his official dispatch to the home government. "I have the happiness to inform your Lordship," it read, "that it has pleased God to bless his Majesty's arms in this province with signal victory over the Regulators."

But many in the camp that night berated Tryon for a tyrant and a murderer; for the battle might well have been avoided; and, even casting that aside, the death of Robert Thompson had left a stain on Tryon that the waters of a thousand rivers could never wash away.

CHAPTER XXI

Several Mysteries Spring Up

HAD some well-directed ounce of lead found lodgment, before the Alamance, within the body of William Tryon, he might have been the better for it. He would still have been regarded as a despot of most despicable stamp, and posterity would still have termed him an unqualified ass; yet, withal, he would have escaped the well-earned title of murderer. But bullets seldom go aright, and Tryon came from the field with skin unbroken.

Then it was that the situation ran away with the man. He had won the fight, it is true; but not until he had lost it. A keg of powder added to the enemy's store would have turned the Alamance against the king's forces; and no man, however wise, can say what would have happened after that. With Tryon routed, his army in retreat, his stores and ammunition captured, the Regulators might have swept British rule from the Carolinas then and forever. And Victory, riding onward, would have sounded the bell of liberty a full five years before the day on which it rang. But the lack of a little keg of powder turned the tide the other way.

It was after this that Tryon took to hanging his prisoners. Now, hanging is a thing that few people

like — patriots the least of all; and when the governor (who should have been kneeling in his tent giving thanks to God that the enemy's powder had run short) began stringing up his foemen, he spoiled forever what little remained of the good name which every man may have if he keeps quiet and gives his enemies time to cool down.

Among the Regulators who fell into Tryon's hands was one James Few, a harmless, demented youth who smiled at everything and thought that the whole world smiled with him. Du Val learned with regret that this man was in Tryon's grasp, for he knew that the governor had a letter which Few had written. That letter, in all its rambling length, had but one coherent sentence; and Tryon, with unholy glee in his eyes, had read that sentence thrice before he sent to his baggage wagons for a coil of hempen rope. "I am sent by Heaven"—thus Few had written—"to relieve the world of oppression; and I will begin in North Carolina." Now, Tryon had some notion that he himself had been sent by Heaven for a particular mission; and he brooked no rival. Therefore was Few hanged.

Boggs and Motier were together when the latter learned that Few was to receive some light punishment for his treasonable proclamation. Motier turned to the doctor. "Who is this man Few?" he asked, "and what made him crazy?"

The doctor responded readily. "Few is a harmless fellow," he said, as they walked back to the camp. "When I first knew him he was a bright sort of boy, betrothed to a very pretty girl. They were to be married in a short time; and Few was about the

happiest man I had ever seen. But the governor's dear friend Colonel Fanning, who heads that crowd of Hillsborough politicians, took a fancy to Few's fiancée, and proceeded — in a nice, kind, gentlemanlike way, of course — to accomplish the ruin of the girl. Few discovered the state of affairs shortly before the day set for the wedding. His present condition is the result."

"Too bad that he couldn't have kept his wits long enough to shoot Fanning," mused Motier. with a wrathful gleam in his eyes.

"That's why Fanning gloats over the fellow's capture," responded Boggs. "He's afraid Few may still have enough brains to do it."

"I hope that he has."

The doctor shook his head. "No chance," he said. "The man can never regain his mind."

Boggs prophesied better than he knew, for Few never had a chance to recover his reason. Tryon, with the smirking, dark-faced Fanning at his elbow, had the gibbering maniac hanged before the sun had set. The poor fellow laughed as they put the noose about his neck; for he had no understanding of what it all meant.

As Tryon, with a grim satisfaction in his eyes, looked up toward the gaunt figure that swayed backward and forward against the blood-red western sky, one of the militiamen nudged a companion in the side, "That 'ere corpse swings atween Tryon and heaven, in jest about two different ways," he said. And the chances are that the man was right.

On the day after the fight Boggs was the busiest man in camp, for the wounded numbered over three

score, and cried for his attention. The dead were buried with fitting honors, and the various departments of the little army busied themselves in making ready for the march to Salisbury.

At sunrise Motier began reading the six or eight letters which had been brought to his tent on the day before. One of these was from his father, who had written with the intention of having his message come to Motier before the fight.

"I had determined," wrote M. Du Val, "for reasons which I will explain in proper time, to remove you from the army upon your arrival at Hillsborough. I wished to do this in order that you might accompany me further up the country, whither I am called by a sacred duty. But General Waddell, with whom I am now, being unable by force of circumstances to move forward, I think it better to remain with him until such time as he can effect a junction with the main army. Continue, therefore, with the governor until we meet. Should you in the meanwhile get into battle, you will necessarily be exposed to your full share of danger. In communicating the governor's orders you will have to be where the fight is thickest. I know you will discharge such duties faithfully, but do not volunteer a single blow. Do your duty, but do not be led into anything aggressive. You may think this strange advice, but it will be explained to you in due season."

Motier gave a little laugh as he slipped the letter into his pocket. "That shows several things," he reflected, as he sat on his camp-stool and lit his pipe. "That proves that Sequa knew some time before I did that I was going to the mountains: that is mystery

number one. It indicates, also, that father has some mission up the country: that is mystery number two. The next thing is his request for me to be passive in the battle. Well, when I recall the squabble, I can't remember that I struck a blow that did more than break the skin: but anyway, that makes mystery number three. Then, too, he says that Waddell is tied up by force of circumstances: that is the fourth mystery; but I'll wager that the Regulators have made him retreat. I could have told Tryon a week ago that to send two hundred and fifty men through this country in the face of that crowd of insurgents was the act of an imbecile. But," and he shrugged his shoulders and opened another letter, "that's the governor's business: let him figure it out as best he can."

The second letter was from Esther Wake. Motier's pipe went out several times as he read the scented missive, and his flint and steel kept up a merry crackle through it all. After the first reading Motier smiled. "Parblieu," he said, brushing Boggs' kitten from his shoulder, "here is mystery number five."

Here is what the letter said:

"Dear Motier: We are all overwhelmed with anxiety at the result of the governor's expedition, and eagerly await news from the front. Do be careful, and don't expose yourself to needless danger.

"I spent yesterday at the De Vere's and had some talk with your golden-haired friend. I am afraid, dear boy, that you parted too hastily from this little woman. I haven't heard the whole story, but I think that when you return you should drop in at Beechwood and see how the matter stands. I fear that you have a rival; for while waiting for Alice I chanced to open her autograph album and found a page perfectly bare of

writing but having a badly crushed white rose fastened to it. If you can tell who sent her the rose you will also know where her heart lies, for she blushed very brightly when I spoke of it, and refused to tell me the name of the donor.

"We have, of course, heard nothing from dear Lucille since she left. I hope that she has not run into the severe storms which have been raging along the coast of Virginia. I think that Lucille was very fond of you; and we are all surprised that you never found it out. She seemed heart-broken because you did not come to the wharf to bid her good-bye. I might have told you this before you left, but you and brother William were so closely closeted that I had no opportunity to talk with you.

"Now, my dear Motier, remember you must not walk into the cannon's mouth, nor run your horse under low-limbed trees; for we want you back here again.

"With sincere regard, ESTHER.

"Very sweet," laughed Motier, after the second reading. "But mystery number five is: 'Why is Alice De Vere keeping that rose?'" He folded the letter. "Esther" — he started. Then he looked down. "But here is the inevitable woman's postscript." "By the way," it read, "you will find in your uniform-coat pocket a little bow of blue and white ribbon which I had Tonta slip in there. I want you to wear this as a token of peace. It is a queer little notion of mine; but if you will wear my colors, and be my —" Motier raised his eyes and swore at the tent-top. "Great Cæsar!" he growled, "another commission!" He went back to the blurred comma: "and be my knight, I will feel as though some bond linked together our friendship. I am not in sympathy with this war; and if you agree with me, as a matter between us two wear my ribbons."

Motier stuffed the note into his pocket and drew out a rumpled bunch of ribbon. "I'll have to put a stop to this knight business," he said, trying to smooth out the ribbons on his knee. "There's no chance of winning a Holy Grail or anything else but grey hairs and bad opinions. Well, I'll wear the thing, anyhow; though it isn't exactly a martial decoration. Oho!" And he yawned sleepily. "Esther means well, but if she'd written much more about those two girls — "

He lit his pipe again and began staring at the romping kitten on the floor.

It was clear in Motier's mind that Lucille had not told the members of the governor's household of her parting with him; nor had he spoken of his own part in the matter. As far as he could tell, Lucille was out of his life forever. The thought of her future was not a pleasant one to him; but he persuaded himself that had he devoted his whole life to her, she would have been none the better for it. He was sure that he would have been much the worse.

Then his mind turned to Alice, and he smiled as he thought of the white rose. He still felt that strange dislike of placing her, in his own regard, on a level with the other women whom he had known. There was something about her which made him place her with the higher things of life; but what that something was he did not know.

From Alice his mind turned to Maynard. He had not met the man since the day that Esther Wake had seen them in the garden at Beechwood; but he had thought of him with a strange frequency. As neither had killed the other in battle, the affair with Cantwell

lay somewhere ahead of them both; and Motier longed for the day. Excepting one (he who had been with him through those swift-going months in England) Maynard was the most congenial man-at-arms he had ever known. He felt that to fight a good fight under the eyes of this cool-headed, fearless man would be a distinction well worth the risk. There was still enough of the boy in Motier to make him love a display of his prowess.

His revery ended, Du Val reached out for another letter. The superscription of this one was in an unknown hand; but, as he read the message within, he remembered when and how he had seen this rude penmanship before.

"Munseer," it ran, "for gods saik look owt fer jake Cantwell. hes praktisin evvry day with his sord and he sez hes goin upp to the mowntins to ketch you. they sez yer a frencher but i bett yer carlina enuf to skin that air pollywog allive. yer frend, A Frend."

" 'Your friend, A Friend,' " repeated Motier, with a laugh. "I'd give half a crown to know who he is. He seems to fear Cantwell more than I do. Vive l' ami! I hope to meet him some day."

A shadow crossed the tent floor. Motier looked up. Malcolm, the senior aide, stood in the doorway. "His Excellency wishes you," he said, with a mock salute.

"He can have me," responded Du Val, throwing down his pipe and stuffing the letters into his pocket. "What's in the wind now?"

"Another hanging-bee," was the answer. "A devilish unpleasant one, too."

"How? Any special features?"

"Yes; a woman in the case.'

"H'm! There frequently is when a man hangs."

The army stood at rest beneath the trees. Huddled together, with a guard about them, were the prisoners of yesterday's conflict. The governor and some of his officers stood together by the rude gallows from which the demented Few had gone to eternity. Beside the dangling noose stood Messer, one of the captured Regulators, bound hand and foot, but calm and fearless. At Tryon's feet knelt a slight, thin-featured woman, apparently of the poorer class. She was weeping piteously, and a ten-year-old boy who stood near by was crying as though his heart would break.

Doctor Boggs took Motier's arm as the Frenchman, parting from Malcolm, went toward the governor. "Yesterday was bad enough," he said, fiercely, "but this is worse. I'd like to curse his Excellency until my face turned blue."

"Sedition, rank sedition," responded Motier, "but I swear I agree with you."

Motier took his place by the governor. Tryon looked down at the woman with a sneer on his lips. "Well," he asked, petulantly, "why don't you go? You have my answer."

The woman sobbed aloud. "But spare his life, your Excellency," she cried, "don't kill my husband. He's all we've got in the world: don't kill him!"

Tryon's face gave no sign of feeling. "You are wasting breath," he said, harshly. "I've told you that he must hang. He has five minutes more: talk to him, not to me." And he turned away and walked toward the camp.

The woman arose and followed him. "Your Excellency," she sobbed, "if you have any feeling, listen — "

"You have my answer," he replied, shortly. "Do not speak to me again." He made another move toward his tent.

The young boy ran to his side. "If your Excellency please," he said, lifting his big blue eyes to Tryon's face, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, "don't hurt papa."

Tryon's face was unmoved. "Your mother has my answer," he said, coldly. "Go to her."

But the boy did not go. "Please, your Excellency," he entreated, his lips quivering and his little hands clasped together, "if you've got to hang some one, hang me and let papa go."

A slight smile crossed Tryon's face. "Who told you to ask that?" he questioned.

"Nobody, your Excellency: I just ask it myself." The boy's face was white and he trembled from head to foot.

The governor looked at him with eyes that softened for one brief moment. "What is your reason for making this request?" he asked.

"Because," the boy answered, "if you hang me it won't make no diff'rence; but if you hang papa, mamma will die too, and so will little brother and sister." The boy still kept his great eyes fixed on the governor's face.

Tryon cleared his throat. "Well," he said, with some gentleness. "I will change my plan, and will not hang your father to-day." He turned and left the field.

But he had not said that he would not hang the man a week from that day.

A few days later the army started upon its march from the Alamance to make a junction with the force of General Waddell, which the Regulators had driven back to Salisbury. Motier was sitting on his horse, reining him in tightly as the drum corps thundered by.

Doctor Boggs approached him. "We part here," he said, "I am ordered back with the wounded to Hillsborough. I hope when you reach your father he will find something better for you than gracing Tryon's triumphal march. I trust you will never get into another such scrape. Really, Du Val, I am sorry to leave you. We have had pleasant communing together; but we shall meet again before long. I expect to give a good report of you to the girl at Beechwood — There, no back talk! Good-bye, my boy, and God bless you!" And the grip of the doctor's hand was that of a man who means all that he says.

At Salisbury Motier met his father, and was relieved from further service in the army. Governor Tryon complimented him upon the faithful performance of his duties, and laid great stress upon the young man's coolness during the battle, which Tryon seemed to rank with the greatest conflicts of history.

Tryon, after a march of triumph through the upper towns of the province, released several of his prisoners, held a few more for the orders of the king, and proceeded, with all due delicacy, to hang the rest. Among these last was John Pugh, the rifleman, who met death without a sign of fear, after having denounced Tryon in a speech which that worthy

gentleman cut short in the middle by swinging the speaker into eternity quite a half-hour before the appointed time.

Messer, whose son had interceded for him at the Alamance, was hung on the same day. The wife and the little son made no plea this time, for they thought the man safe. Messer himself, having no nonsense in his composition, knew from the first that Tryon would strangle him at the earliest opportunity.

Du Val, much to his gratification, missed this latest demonstration of Tryon's official courtesy, and having joined his father, made plans for a future of bewildering uncertainties.

The elder Du Val seemed badly run down in health, and had abandoned his trip to the mountains. After a long conference in which Motier found much that seemed mysterious, his father gave him a letter for Captain Maynard with instructions to ride up the mountain road until the captain met him. This command seemed so remarkable that Motier could hardly believe it to be uttered in earnest; but his father insisted, and with no further light on the matter, Motier prepared for the trip.

He puzzled his brain for several days, but could find no reason why his father should send a communication to Maynard in such a manner and at such a time; but he was not sorry, for he wanted to talk with the captain upon the matter of one Jacob Cantwell, who was coming into the mountains to "ketch" him. And that thought gave birth to another: how did young Cantwell know that Motier was going to the up-country?

CHAPTER XXII

An Awkward Surprise

A WEEK after Motier Du Val and his father parted at Salisbury, a party of a dozen horsemen were riding slowly over a ridge road that wound its way along the crest of a mountain range in western Carolina. All save the two in the lead rode with the lounging ease of veteran troopers, their accoutrements rattling merrily, their sword-hilts close at their hands and their carbines gleaming brightly in the afternoon sun.

The two who rode ahead were Captain Neale, of the Rangers, mounted on a great bay charger, and Motier Du Val, astride his own horse Fleetfoot. The officer, attired in the fatigue uniform of the the provincial army, carried sword and pistols. Duval wore a civilian's garb, and his weapons, if any he had, were concealed beneath his coat.

The down-going sun was close to the top of the range, and the trees that lined the rocky road were casting long shadows across the highway.

"By St. George!" ejaculated the officer, checking his horse a little, "the road gets rockier with every rod. Our prospect for a night under cover seems none of the best. What say you, Du Val? down there in the valley we might find water and a smooth spot for a

camp; but I doubt our reaching it in time. I caught the sparkle of a stream down there but a moment ago. We may be able to make it if we do not waste our daylight. Shall we try?"

Motier steered his horse around a giant boulder. "As you will, Captain," he answered, settling back again into his saddle. "Remember that I make no claim to woodcraft. I see no path leading toward the valley; but if you say go, I'll follow."

"I hate to risk it so late in the day," said Neale, with an anxious glance toward the sun. "Should darkness catch us in that chasm we'd never find the road again. I wish to heaven we'd brought a guide with us."

Neale turned his horse and faced his little party. "Do any of you know this country?"

The soldiers looked at one another and smiled. Every head shook its negative response.

"Well," said Neale, with the calm of one whose habit is to take things as they come, "we'll keep ahead until we find some trace of human life." He turned his horse's head again to the west, and spoke to DuVal. "We're outside the civilized world, I guess," he said, with a little laugh, "we've been traveling for three days over the worst road in Christendom — or heathendom, whichever it is — and have yet to see the first decent-looking house. Let your mind drop back to the pictures of domestic bliss as we've seen it in the huts along the way: women, women, children, children. Have they no husbands or fathers, do you think?"

"The men were hunting, so their wives said."

"Yes; all hunting; but hunting what? We've seen

none of them. A king's uniform drives these rabbits to their burrows quicker than aught else, except the tax-collector. How far back would you call the last house we passed?"

"Something like ten miles."

"So I think. I fear, Du Val, we are on a fool's errand. How are we to find our man among all these crags and hollows and caverns, and cracks like this one?" He pointed to a crevice beside the road. "Ye gods! I can smell hell's sulphur coming up through it now. It passes my poor wits to know how to find the fellow. However, be it one way or the other, orders are orders; and, if our information amounts to anything, we are still upon the trail. Now — but I call that smoke, don't you? There to the right, between us and that ragged peak. See it?"

"Yes. It's smoke all well enough; perhaps a dwelling; more probably a hunters' camp. Either would suit us now, if they feed us and refrain from poisoning our soup."

"Well, let's keep ahead. This road probably snakes around toward it some way."

Spurring up their horses the party clattered on at a lively gait. Dipping over the brow of a little hill, they caught a glimpse of a figure disappearing into a thicket by the roadside. Neale drew his pistol. "Who's there?" he shouted, galloping toward the bushes that still swayed with the passing of the person. "Come out," he yelled, waving his weapon toward the woods, "if you don't, I'll blow your brains out."

A woman came forth from the thicket and entered the road. The captain wheeled his horse and faced her.

She was of masculine proportions, broad and brawny, and arrayed in a blue-checked gown of homespun. Her features, partially hidden by a great sunbonnet, were bold and prominent, and her keen gray eyes twinkled with expression.

"I beg you to excuse me, my good woman," said Neale, returning his pistol to its holster and touching his hat; "had I known you to be one of the gentler sex, I should not have called so roughly. I trust that I did not alarm you. But why did you try to hide from us?"

The woman raised her head and smiled. "'It's gude to dread the warst; the best will be the welcomer,'" she answered, in a sharp unmusical voice.

The captain pulled at his mustache. "Ah! I see," he said, reflectively. "Scotch, or Scotch-Irish. Yet not, I hope, the less loyal to his British Majesty, King George; nor the less ready to help his officers if need be. But you answer me in a proverb. Let me suggest another, which I learned from my good old grandmother: 'Ill doers are aye ill dreaders.'"

"'A burnt bairn dreads the fire,'" responded the woman, "I didna ken but ye might be Regulators. Sith ye gang wi' the king, God bless him! I'm ower glad to see ye. But it's nae wrang for a puir weak woman to hide hersel' from stranger sodgers wi' lang guns, when she canna tell friends from foes. 'Mettle's nae gude for a blind mare.'"

"Quite right, quite right," responded the captain, gallantly. "It well befits your tender sex to be timid. I am glad to see you, since you are so good a friend to the king. We shall want your aid. Here, Du Val," he said to Motier, as he and the soldiers halted close by,

"here is the guide we've prayed for. This good woman lives close by — you said close by, did you not?"

"Nae, nae; I didna say. But it's na sae mony miles — beyant the crags there." And she pointed to a rugged peak dimly looming through the haze above the foothills.

The captain's eyes followed the direction of her fingers. "By Heaven!" he said, with dismay. "We can never get there!"

"Hoot awa, mon! Gin ye swim the loch, an' nae let the grass grow under your feet, it wadna tak lang i' the night."

"Worse and worse!" cried Neale, with a disheartened shrug. "We can't — But how do you get home? you don't swim the lake?"

"Nae; I go a shorter path; but the beasties couldna keep their footin' in it."

"We must give that up," said the captain. "But is there no other place, somewhere within a reasonable distance, where we might find shelter, or at least, water? What makes that smoke ahead of us?"

"It's an auld wife's lodge; and the string o' the latch hangs outside the door."

"Could she give us food and shelter and some fodder for the horses?"

"Auld Locky hae muckle and to spare; and gin ye hae siller, 'twill be a hame o' your ain. 'Money maks a mon free ilka where.'"

"Guide us to the place, and we'll pay you well."

"My ain path gaes fornent. When we come to the partin' I'll show ye the way, sae wi' half an e'e ye canna miss it."

"Soho! my men!" called Neale, jocularly. "Forward to the house where the latch-string hangs outside."

"Nae, nae," protested the woman, "gie'n ye gang at sic a gait I canna keep up. 'Mair haste the waur speed, quoth the tailor to the lang thread.' "

"I beg pardon," laughed the captain, reining in his horse; "I forgot that you were walking. But it's late, and time is short."

They moved on for a while in silence. The captain looked carelessly about him as one who seeks for natural scenes to please the eye. Motier, his eyelids slightly lowered, looked fixedly at their guide.

The silence was abruptly broken by the captain. "Has this place a name?" he asked of the woman.

"This ridge ye're ridin' on? They call it The Deil's Backbane."

"Thundering good name — judging by its virtues as a road," exclaimed Neale. "But it has a sound of evil omen. My good mother," he added, after a little pause, "you seem to have little love for the Regulators. Have they ever troubled you?"

"Did they na tak my gude mon frae his bed sleepin' by my side, and wi' his hands tied all helpless, tak him to a tree before me and the childer, and blay him till the brath was well-nigh gane from his puir body! Love them! Aye, as the deil lo'es holy water!"

"You have good reasons then for being a loyalist. Tell me, now, have you ever seen Herman Husbands? Do you know the man?"

"Do I ken Herman Husbands? Troth I ken him well eno'; and it's na muckle gude I ken o' him. He

was alang—the head o' a'—the night they got my puir Dugald. He cam back t'ither day, sair greeted; and tried with his siller to mak it a' up, and be friends ag'in. But I'm na ilka mon's dog that whistles on me."

"Where is he now?"

"Wad ye like to see the deil's bairn?"

"He's the man we want, good woman. Put us in the way to find him, and a good reward will be yours."

"Wad ye, tho'? How much siller?"

"Well, say ten pounds sterling: will that do?"

"Aweel, aweel! Ten pounds is muckle money to gie a puir body to do her ain pleasure. But the king's rich; and 't wad be a bonny lift for a rainy day. I canna say ye nae." Then resting her hand on the horse's shoulder, and lowering her voice for Neale's ear, "Gie'n Herman's na at Tam Braun's, ye may find him at the auld wife's where ye're gangin' for the night. He was there yestreen; and they looked for him to-day. He sleeps i' the sma' house i' the corner o' the yard. But ye maun be cautious, or ye'll fright the bird."

"But maybe the old woman will be on watch?"

"Maybe! Maybe's are no aye honey-bees! Auld dame Locky has nae mair lo' for him than I hae mysel'. But here we be at the partin'."

They had come to a great circling sweep in the ridge, where the main road veered to the right, and a smaller path, descending into a gloomy hollow, continued straight to the west.

"I maun lea' ye here," the woman said, halting by the roadside. "Your way lies doon there. I canna leave the Deil's Backbane sae soon."

"But, my good woman, you were to guide us."

" 'Tis a clear track noo. Bear to the right at ilka fork. Ye see the smoke ag'in' the trees. There's nae branch or moor to trouble ye wi' the crassin'. But dinna hurry: let the sun gang to his lair, or Herman 'll get his een upon ye."

"Suppose Husbands is not there. What then?"

"I'll tak a look at Tam as I gae by, and gie him twa o' the pounds — tho' I canna spare sae muckle — to tak Herman down. A smart carle is Tammy."

"Well, since you must leave us, here is your money, good friend." And the captain pulled out some coin, a half crown and a few pennies. He tendered the largest piece to the woman, who took it with an awkward curtsey, and cast a wistful glance at the pennies.

"Can ye nae let the horns gang wi' the hide?" she asked.

Neale gave an amused laugh. "Take them," he said, holding out his palm. "And now, good-bye; and thank you. Remember your ten pounds reward if we find him."

"I'll nae forget. And if Tammy canna bring the mon, I'll fetch him mysel'." And she turned up the road.

As they entered the path to the hollow, Motier, who had been regarding the woman with suspicion, turned in his saddle and glanced back. The woman was watching them, and to Du Val's eyes she looked six inches taller than when she had stood beside them. But as he looked, she turned, and quickly passed from view.

Neale held back his horse. "She was a godsend to us, wasn't she?" remarked the captain, as Du Val came up beside him. "What did you think of her?"

"She has gained my deepest distrust."

Neale looked at Motier in surprise. "Distrust!" he echoed. "Why, the woman is one of those honest old Scotch people who would die rather than lie. Why do you distrust her?"

"Why? Because she was playing a part. She's as Scotch as I am: her dialect broke out in little spots. Eight-tenths of her words were pure English. And her voice! She had six or seven voices. I fear treachery."

"Pshaw!" laughed Neale. "Wait, my dear Du Val, until you know these mountaineers as I do. They're a rough set, and they talk more dialects than a sailor's parrot; but they're honest to the core. This woman's account tallied perfectly with our former information: you concede that? She is prompted by her revenge and by her love of gold — which last, you know, is a good, strong motive with a Scot."

Motier shook his head. "As you will, Captain," he said, with a smile, "but take my advice and shoot the rest of her kind that come our way."

"No fear," retorted Neale. "The woman who outwits us must rise early and stay out late." And he began humming some careless little song.

After a few moments the captain's music stopped. "There's one thing that troubles me, Du Val," he said. "Should we capture Husbands to-night — and I'd wager my horse on it — I must return with my command, and leave you to go on alone. I don't like

to turn you loose in the wilderness; but — orders, you know. Do you go much further?"

"I think not," answered Motier, with reserve. "But do not feel anxious on my account. I'll follow the road until something stops me."

Neale, whose conversational abilities were immense, drew closer to Motier, and made ready to speak. "It has puzzled me to conceive what brings you to this heathen country, Du Val," he said, settling back into his saddle and letting his horse pick his own way. "I cannot ask you, for the question would be indelicate; but it seems legitimate for me to make suggestions. If it is your purpose to locate lands, the direction of our present course will soon bring you into an uninhabited region of great resources. But if you bear too far to the right, you'll find yourself in a part of the world where mystery, if not enchantment, abounds. If your course goes that way, you could scour the Carolinas without finding a corporal's guard to go there with you."

"Really, Captain," said Motier, smiling, "my curiosity is rampant."

"Then I will gratify it — at least, as far as I can. As to the land, my knowledge was all gained from Tryon. I am as much a stranger in these parts as you are, but the governor, when he came up here to make his survey of the Cherokee boundary, found large sections of country unoccupied except by scattered tribes of Indians. This land he thought inferior to none in the province; and he spoke of making entries for himself on speculation.

"Now, the region of mystery and enchantment —

and it has been a theme for winter night talks in my home since my childhood — it is a curious thing. My grandfather, who was a great hunter, spent much time in these mountains and my father followed closely in his footsteps. Both have told marvelous tales of what they had heard and seen.

"In olden times, a gentlemanly cut-throat known as Bloody Jack used to pounce upon the early settlements and, with a formidable band of his peers, commit all sorts of depredations wherever he went. The settlers would often take their guns and give chase; but on each occasion Jack and his men would lose themselves in the mountains. At last, when neither life nor property was secure, the people rose *en masse* and surrounded the place where the bandits usually made their disappearance. Instead of seeking a refuge, Jack and his men broke through the ranks of their pursuers and got inside their circle, which was nearly a mile in diameter.

"This was what the settlers wanted. So, keeping the outlaws always in sight, they closed in upon them. Jack led the way to a bleak looking mountain which the Indians called Yaunocca. At the foot of this peak the bandits turned and fired a volley at their pursuers. The guns were aimed low and the smoke rolled along over the ground. When it lifted and blew away, Jack and his whole band had vanished.

"The astonished settlers searched the whole landscape but found no trace of the men or of their lair. Some said the mountain opened to receive them, and closed up again; some visionary fellows swore that the men rose into the air and flew away; and

others of similar mental calibre concluded that the robber band was something more than human. Within a week, however, Jack and his crowd were at their old tricks.

"By and by they disappeared altogether. Years passed, and the story had become a tradition; and even that was dying out, when all at once the mountain became the centre of a new mystery. A beautiful woman was seen walking about the rocks and crags. Here, there, and everywhere, she appeared; and even while the amazed people looked at her she would vanish out of view. They say that she is still in the mountains; and the people round about here believe her to be Bloody Jack's daughter."

"A wild story," said Motier, laughing, "but at all events an interesting one. What do they call this woman?"

"Wallannah — an Indian name."

Motier started a little at the captain's answer. "Does she speak to those who approach her?" he asked.

"Indeed yes; in any language."

"Seems a queer thing," said Du Val, thoughtfully. "What do you think of the story?"

"I? I think nothing: I only repeat what I have heard. The Indians hold her in great veneration and call her a prophetess. But, Du Val, twilight is upon us; we must quicken our pace. That confounded smoke is as far away as ever."

"Farther, I should say," Motier answered. "A few minutes and the darkness will shut out that landmark from our view."

"Distances are deceptive," replied Neale. "As

much so through these valleys as across water. I well remember — But listen!" He reined up his horse and held up his hand to halt the men behind them.

"Horses," said Du Val.

"Some travelers along the ridge," suggested the captain.

"Noise enough for a royal guard."

"Cattle, probably. This region is a great grazing ground. Cattle, you know, constitute the wealth of these people. But the sounds have passed beyond us; let's move ahead. Ahead, my men! We must eat and sleep to-night." As he spoke they emerged from the woods and entered an open glade, girt about by large trees and thick undergrowth.

Suddenly Motier pulled back his horse. Neale made a swift reach for his sword. The sound of breaking branches and ripping leaves broke upon the air; and with a wild chorus of yells a hundred Indians burst into the glade.

The struggle was a short one. The soldiers, riding at ease, without thought of danger, had no time to reach their weapons before they were unhorsed and tightly bound. Neale went down before his sword was half unsheathed. Motier alone made a show of defense. Facing a half dozen of the painted warriors, and seeing that life was a mere chance, he determined to fight while he could. Pulling a pistol from beneath his coat he pushed it against the chest of the nearest Indian and fired. His other assailants hesitated long enough for the Frenchman to draw another pistol; but, seeing him ready for his second shot, they sprang forward with uplifted hatchets. Motier, with the same

slight smile that always hovered about his lips when death looked him in the face, waited until his foes were almost at his horse's head. Then he raised his pistol and his finger pressed the trigger. At that moment, when two lives were all but at their end, a loud shout sounded about the din of conflict.

"Sau-hau! Yenxauhe!"

The savages stopped suddenly; Motier lowered his pistol; and all looked in the direction of the call.

Out of the gloom of the overhanging trees rode Herman Husbands.

CHAPTER XXIII

A Move Forestalled

HUSBANDS rode forward among the Indians and spoke to them in their own language. They were angry, and pointed frequently to the motionless form of the warrior whom Motier had shot. The argument was a long one, but at last the Quaker's efforts met with success, and his red-skinned friends replaced their weapons in their belts and gave attention to their wounded comrade.

Husbands approached the prisoners. "Captain Neale," he said, saluting, "a woman back yonder on the Devil's Ridge promised to send or bring Herman Husbands to you to-night. She has kept her word."

Neale, standing against a tree, smiled and said: "Wish she'd been in the devil's claws instead of on his back," he muttered. "Tell her so, with my regards."

"You forget your gallantry, Captain," returned Husbands. "But not for the first time, perhaps. Allow me, before we part, to give you a little advice after the good woman's own manner." Then, in the sharp falsetto tones which were still fresh in the captain's memory, "'Keep your breath to cool your ain porridge'; and 'Ne'er sca'd your lips in ither folk's kale.'"

Neale's face reddened, and he made an effort to free himself from the cords that bound his hands. "Husbands," he said, with bitterness, "you take ungenerous advantage of my position. But, as you are fond of proverbs, let me remind you that 'Every dog will have his day.'"

"And you had yours at the Alamance," responded Husbands, quietly and in his natural voice. "But, 'let bygones be bygones.' I did not come to tantalize you: Heaven knows my own troubles weigh heavily enough. I might say, for your information, that these Indians are in arms as friends of the Regulators. They hate the governor and everything that is his. I think, however, that if you do nothing to anger them, they will give you little trouble. If you try to escape, you may as well say your last prayer. You and your men will be prisoners until I and a few others, whom your precious government is driving from the province, are beyond your reach. I am going away from Carolina to a land where men can be men. So, you need hunt me no longer." Passing by Du Val, who, unhorsed and tightly bound, sat upon a log, Husbands bent toward him. "A bad business, Monsieur Du Val.' he said, in a low voice. "I hope the wounded man may not die. But in any event be prudent. I cannot help you more than to send to you one who may be able to give you aid." He turned his horse's head to the woods, and with a nod to the circle of warriors, disappeared into the forest.

The night was now upon them; and the Indians, placing their wounded comrade upon a hastily made litter of saplings and branches, gave each of their

prisoners into the charge of a warrior. The captives were quickly stripped of everything of value except their clothing, and were led into the woods on the westward march. Motier and Neale and the soldiers walked behind the litter; and after them rode the older savages.

In this manner they went their silent way, over hills and through valleys, by beaten paths and in tangled byways, wading small streams and climbing over rugged rocks. And Motier thought the night the longest he had ever passed. To the white men it was a weary march, and their feet and legs throbbed and stiffened long before the coming of the dawn. Sometimes, when fatigue all but overcame them, and they lagged but ever so little in their gait, their unpitying guards, themselves showing no sign of weariness, pushed and dragged them forward in a way that gave no hope of rest. Tramp, tramp, tramp, they went through the livelong night. And all the sound their marching made came from the beat of the horses' unshod hoofs and from the booted step of the prisoners; for the moccasined tread of the savage is as noiseless as the panther's footfall.

Besides the slight sounds of their movement over the ground little came to the captives' ears save the tinkle of the metal bangles upon the ankles of the Indians. This music was so faint and so overpowering in its monotony that Motier could hardly keep awake. Now and then, it is true, they heard the weird cry of some startled night-bird or the barking of a dog in a far-away valley, and, oftener than these, the murmur of water rippling over rocks that lay far below their

path. But these faint sounds seemed but to make the stillness deeper.

At last, after hours and hours of struggling on through the dark, the sky behind them took on the grey that comes before the sun's rising. Then it was that they found their course to be several points toward the south of west; and Motier knew that their captors were the Cherokees, whose villages lay in that direction. He had heard in far-off New Bern that the Indians were in their war paint, and, further, he remembered the words of Sequa, "the beautiful," and he knew why she had given him the bracelet. But his heart sank a little, for the tiny trinket was now fastened about the wrist of the surly fellow who pulled him along the path.

The Cherokees, he knew, had been for years the allies of the white man; but he also knew that latterly they had become jealous and exacting in their dealings with the other race. If they had awaited a favorable opportunity to break through the flimsy bonds of their peace treaty, their time seemed now to have come. The hand of Tryon had borne hard upon these children of the forest, and among their closest friends were the men whom the governor was striving to kill or to drive to exile. What more fitting than a union with the Regulators? So they made common cause with the other foemen of the king, and started down to help them fight their fight. It appeared afterward that the alliance was but partial, and that few of the Cherokees joined the move; but to Motier's mind the situation of the men who were now in the hands of the savages was a critical one.

Motier, with a calmness that surprised him, awaited the coming of the light that would let him see the man who lay upon the litter before him. If the fellow were dead, then were Du Val's days less in number than the fingers of his hand; but if he lived? — he did not know. But be it life or be it death, the pride that was in him made him swear to give no sign of fear or of pain to the men who called him captive.

They were winding up through the shadowy depths of a moss-bedded glen. Above them, high on the ragged heights of the cliffs that pointed skyward, the red glow of the sunlight alternately flamed and paled as the morning mists opened and closed before the sun. The dusky moving mass about him had shaped itself into men and horses; and the shadows on either hand had opened into trees and vines and slimy rocks. The grey mist still hung in the hollows, and across the face of a grim peak that loomed at the opening of the vista before them, stretched a long thin finger of pink cloud.

Du Val began to scan the faces and forms of the little band of which he seemed the centre. To his left was Neale, pale and dejected, stumbling over every root and rock which came in his way. Behind him were four of his soldiers trudging on with sullen faces, and muttering oaths as they walked. At Motier's right were the rest of the rangers, some walking in good form and showing little fatigue, others staggering as they went and meeting with scant consideration from their scowling guides. The Indians were naked to the waist, and their faces and bodies were gleaming with hideous painted emblems. Their heads, bare save for

the scalp-lock at the crown, were topped with clusters of feathers tipped with blood. Their breech-clouts and leggings were fringed and spangled, and their dirty moccasins gleamed with fancy bead-work. None seemed armed with guns, but each carried in his belt a keen-edged tomahawk. With a strange fascination Du Val watched these silent, grim-faced savages as they marched with light, untiring step through the forest. Their bodies gleamed with some bad-smelling grease, and beneath the oil and the paint he could see the easy rise and fall of muscles that seemed never to cease their play. But he could not see the man upon the litter.

At last they reached the head of the glen and stepped with startling suddenness into a wide glade bright with sunshine and green with a carpet of waving grass. The Indians spread their ranks into a more open formation, and Motier was pushed to a place close behind the wounded brave. He looked at the man who lay upon the litter, and saw that he still lived. At the time, he did not know whether to be glad or sorry. If his life depended upon the man's recovery, he felt that he might give reasonable thanksgiving that the savage heart still beat; but if death were to come anyway, he wished that he might have placed his pistol more to the right, for the ragged hole in his chest was an inch too far the other way. The blood oozed from the wound in little foamy bubbles, and he knew that his shot had found its way through the lung. The man's features were sharp and rigid, and his eyes half closed; but no sound came from his lips, except when a hard-drawn breath would suck through his clenched

teeth. Then, turning his eyes away from his victim, Motier began to wonder when the deliverer of whom Husbands had spoken would come.

Half way across the sunny glade the savages halted by the bank of a stream that, scarcely wider than a man's step is long, rippled over the gravel between waving lines of green. They laid the litter upon the ground, and from the rear guard came an old man, dressed in a great variety of skins and furs and feathers, and with a face that, clean and unpainted, lacked but a nose to make it seem human. Whether war or disease had made the man's face flat as the palm of a hand, Motier could not guess, but he did know that this hideous creature was the medicine-man of the tribe. As the man walked across to the litter the sun glittered on the rows of bears' claws and sharks' teeth that swung from his neck and wrists; and the dull red figures on the outer side of the hide which hung cloak-like about his tall, ungainly figure seemed to glow like blood in the morning light.

Motier watched the doctor closely as he bent over the wounded warrior; for he knew that on this man's word might hang his own life. He knew from the lowering looks and grumbling comments of the savages that the medicine-man's report was not a bright one. But he felt relieved when a young brave dipped some water from the brook and washed the wound. "None but a fool would wash a dying Indian," he reflected. "This fellow must have some chance of life."

Building a fire by some feat of barbarous ingenuity, the doctor stewed a decoction of herbs and applied it to the patient's chest. In something like a half hour the

man had fallen asleep and the beaded sweat stood out upon his face and shoulders.

In the mean time the younger men had lighted a fire of their own and were preparing the morning meal. The odor of the smoking meat drifted to Motier's nostrils, and its savor was maddening; for neither he nor his companions had tasted food since noon of the day before, and hunger such as theirs can be felt from the head down to the feet.

Captain Neale, watching with wistful eyes a piece of venison that sputtered on the coals close by his side, forgot the discretion which had kept him silent through the night. "Say, Du Val," he whispered, "suppose the gentlemen will ask us to join the feast?" A slap from a warrior's dirty hand stopped further remark.

But Neale did not know the Indian heart; for the prisoners, with hands unbound, were lined up within the circle of the red men and were given their food before their captors took a mouthful. An Indian will divide his last morsel with his bitterest enemy, and will seldom even lead a man to the stake without first offering him the best from his store of food.

After an hour of rest and refreshment, which the men sorely needed, the march was resumed in the same order as before. At noon they stopped again and dined, the Indians eating gluttonously. After the meal all, captor and captive alike, lay on the soft grass and slept. The guards took no further precaution with their prisoners than to fasten about their own wrists the ends of the thongs which bound the white men's arms.

As soon as the camp seemed in perfect quiet, Motier

raised his head and looked about him. He could see the men, white and red, clustered about in little knots, but none of them seemed awake. Even the five guards, who were sitting with their backs against as many great oaks, were deep in slumber. Du Val looked down at the deerskin cord that bound him to his captor. It was drawn tight between them. He worked himself closer to the sleeping Indian, and the thong, slackening, sagged until its middle touched the ground. Then, closing his fists, he strained his wrists apart until one of the knots gave way the veriest trifle. He rested a moment and looked about him. Fleetfoot, picketed to a slender bush, stood but a few yards away. With his eyes still shifting from one Indian to another he resumed the slow straining at his bonds. Between him and Fleetfoot lay half a dozen sleeping savages, but beside each of them was a space wide enough for a safe footing. The carbines of the soldiers were stacked on the further side of the glade near one of the dreaming guards. He cast his eyes down to the red-skin at his side. A tomahawk lay within the grasp of the half-relaxed grimy fingers. Motier had one hand half through the circle of buckskin. His guard moved a little and muttered in his sleep. Motier gave a quick pull with his arm and the thongs slipped to the ground. His hands free, he began working his way toward Fleetfoot. With a sudden thought he looked back at his guard.

"Hist!" The whispered signal seemed like a thunder-clap in the Frenchman's ears.

Motier, dropping back to his former position, ran his eyes quickly about the circle. An Indian warrior,

his paint-streaked face distorted with a frown, and his hand grasping a heavy tomahawk, stood within an arm's length.

Motier, knowing what fate to expect, hardened his face into a look of indifference, and returned the stare of the savage's glaring eyes. "Well?" he said, quietly, "what do you —"

But he did not finish his question.

CHAPTER XXIV

Some Heathen Justice

DU VAL'S inquiry, prompted by a spirit of bravado, was cut short by a sign of caution from the Indian. "No talk — no move," the savage whispered. "Indian kill. Me friend." And the man raised his wrist and showed the bracelet which Sequa had fastened to Motier's arm on the way to the Alamance. "Me Tetah," the chief continued. "Save him pale-face. Tie 'g'in — quick!" And he stooped beside Motier, and with a few quick turns bound his hands as close as they had been before. "Now go sleep," he whispered. "Move more — Indian kill." He sank to the ground and closed his eyes.

Motier lay looking at the sky above him. High overhead circled a buzzard, a tiny speck against the blue. A smile crossed the young man's face. "If he flies to the north," he muttered, under his breath, "I'll go to sleep; if he goes south I'll watch the thing out."

The bird rested a moment, then with a long downward swoop turned his head away from the sun. Motier drew a long breath, closed his eyes, and in a moment had dropped asleep.

Toward the evening of the next day the warrior band with its little herd of captives approached a village from which thin, wavering lines of smoke, rising

lazily above the trees, had been visible for several hours. Rather to Motier's surprise Tetah had taken no further notice of his grandson's Caiheek. They had met frequently on the march, but during their intervals of rest the Indian's eyes never sought the Frenchman's face. Motier, trusting in the chieftain's promise, cared little for his present indifference if, in the end, he would keep his word.

They had left the forest and were passing between fields of corn and of oats, small enclosures protected for the greater part by hedges of thorny bushes. Here and there a dark, half clad figure moved about, and women with their pappooses were seen working among the ragged rows of green.

As they drew nearer to the rising smoke the procession halted, and four savages stepped to the front. Holding their arms above their heads they opened their mouths in a long yell, as clear as though it came from but one man's throat. Then, lowering their clenched fists to their sides they bent slightly forward and gave fourteen short and deafening whoops. These told the number of their prisoners.

There were faint answering shouts from beyond the trees, and with them the pounding of drums and the barking of dogs. The march was resumed, and as they neared the outskirts of the town there came to meet them a great swarm of women and children, talking excitedly and cutting the air with sticks and clubs and switches. The captives guessed and guessed rightly that these things were meant to give a merry welcome to the prisoners; for the crowd lined up on either side of the road and with jeers and laughs made

ready for their sport. But Tetah stepping forward spoke a few words of command, and the implements of torture were dropped to the ground. Quietly the band marched into the village, warriors and captives, the first to find a welcome home, the others — who could tell?

Du Val, whose pistol practice had given him the distinction of a prisoner of honor, was separated from his companions and was lodged in a strongly-built cabin, with a warrior of forbidding aspect as his custodian. This man and his wrinkled, driveling mother were Motier's only companions for three long days. And poor company they were, for English and French were to them as their vile Cherokee was to Motier, and all their converse was in signs that sometimes went aright, but oftener brought to pass strange complications.

By the end of the third day the suspense had begun to wear on Motier. Much of his spirit had left him, and he thought too often of the things of his former days. Lucille came into his mind with a morbid frequency, and he fought his thoughts of her as a man fights death itself. Once, when the depths of his soul seemed as dark as the night about him, his mind went back to the sobbing figure that, gowned in amber silk, had met his eyes as he turned back at the doorway before he went down to the ten o'clock council of war. He felt a little choking in his throat, and began to wish for his pipe and some tobacco; for few things can give surcease of care so soon as the weed that the Indians call uppowoc. Then, with a suddenness that startled him, came the vision of Alice De Vere, white-gowned

and blue-eyed, as she had looked at the head of her father's table on the morning that seemed so far in the past. He tried to laugh away the memory; but time and again it surged back upon him. He seemed to hear her voice over and above the heavy breathing of his guard, and the ripple of her laughter shut from his ears the chirp of the crickets in the vines upon the roof. And as he thought he wondered; for in those days at Beechwood and in the weeks that followed he had thought of her as one thinks of a new-found friend. But these thoughts? He buried his face in his hands and tried to reason out what it all meant. But his sophistries gave him no relief. As fast as he shut the vision from his eyes and the music from his ears, the vision and the music would come back again with tenfold force; and as daylight broke over the foothills toward the east he knew that his heart turned more to Alice De Vere than it had ever turned to Lucille Creighton. Dreary though his prospect the thought gave him comfort, and he looked to the rising sun with a smile on his lips.

On the fourth day of Motier's imprisonment Tetah came into his cabin, and with an imperious move of the hand sent the surly jailer from the room. The old chief had laid aside his scanty war-attire and had washed the paint from his face. His garb now was the buckskin dress of the hunter, and his features appeared gentle and refined.

When the guard had gone Tetah held up the wrist with the bead-work bracelet. "Where you get him?" he asked.

"From Sequa," was Motier's answer.

"You Tonta Caiheek?"

Du Val nodded his response.

The Indian looked closely at him. "Me save you for Tonta," he said simply.

"You're a good fellow," replied Motier, seeing that Tetah expected some response. "Tell me what to do to help you?"

"Sick man — Usquaughne — die."

"Dead!" repeated Motier, with some show of feeling. "When did he die?"

"Not dead — but die soon. Hear?"

Motier, listening, heard a sound like the rattling of dice in a cup. He had heard it often before, but had not known its meaning. "What is it?" he asked.

"How! Don't know? Him chinchone. Doctor rattle him — cure sick man. Sick man most die — rattle easy."

"Then the man is in the next room? He must be close to his end! The rattle has nearly stopped. But if he dies — what then?"

"Indian have big talk. Say warrior die, pale-face die too."

"Good logic; but you say you can save me?"

"Me save you. Yes. Twelve pale-face — one die. Take soldier — Tonta Caiheek no die." The old man's face glowed with pleasure. A life for a life is a motto as good for an Indian as it was for the Israelite of old; but, differing from the other, this law sometimes adapts its justice to a substitute. The life of the slayer is not always the forfeit.

Tetah seemed surprised at the shadow which came

to the white man's face, which he had expected to show some sign of satisfaction.

But Motier shook his head with convincing firmness. "I must thank you, my friend," he said, "for what you wish to do for me; but it cannot be as you have said. It was I who struck down your warrior; if any one suffers, I must be that one."

When the astounded warrior saw that Du Val's mind was fixed in its determination, he was visibly moved. "Good Caiheek," he said, stretching out his hand, "but too good. Tonta love Caiheek — me love him too. Maybe live — maybe die. Tetah save if he can." And he turned quickly and left the hut.

When Du Val awoke at sunrise the next day he listened first for the rattle which would tell him whether Usquaughne was living or dead. And if ever music sounded sweet in the ear of man, the rattle of dried peas in the medicine-man's gourd was that music. The noise of the chinchone was loud and steady.

Other sounds came to the captive's ears, sounds that even he could not mistake. Drums of heathenish tone banged and boomed at frequent intervals, and a high-pitched, wailing chorus trembled through the air.

"My ears burn," he said to himself, as he rose from the mat on which he had slept. "Those choristers must be singing that ballad for me."

Motier walked toward the opening, where stood his surly guard; but before he reached his goal four gayly painted warriors entered the room. Motier scanned their faces with an assumed carelessness, then turned his back to them and retraced his steps to the other side of the hut. One Indian followed him, and

placed his hand on Motier's shoulder. The Frenchman turned. The warrior pointed to the door; and the little party, with Motier in its centre, went out into the open air.

The escort led Du Val into the council lodge, a long, low structure with a double row of seats about the walls, and with several large mats on its earthen floor. The tallest and most fantastically decorated warrior motioned Du Val to a seat upon the smallest of these mats, and handed him a lighted pipe. Motier seized the offering with avidity. It drew badly, and he pressed down the tobacco with his forefinger. When he looked up he was alone in the lodge.

Affecting an indifference which he did not feel, Motier puffed away at the long-stemmed pipe until it sputtered in the bottom of the bowl and went out. Then came a sound of rattling, for all the world like the noise of the medicine-man's chinchone; and a villainous-looking savage, arrayed in furs and painted skins, and jingling with the teeth and bones and metal ornaments that hung from the edges of his garments, rushed into the room and with a furious sweep of the arm scratched a ragged circle on the ground in front of Motier's mat. Then, jumping into the centre of this space, he began a mad dance, accompanying his contortions with a screeching song. Now and then, to give a personal interest to the proceeding, this dignitary shoved a painted, feather-decked gourd into Motier's face and rattled it fiercely. When, after half an hour of maniacal shouting, his incantation died away in a long shriek, the pagan swung about and cantered out of the room.

As the wailing priest left the lodge, the tall warrior who had led Motier from his prison entered with another lighted pipe.

The prisoner looked up at him. "Bad thing to smoke too much on an empty stomach," he suggested, mildly.

The Indian answered by puffing the tobacco into brighter luminosity and holding out the pipe to Motier. The young man took the proffered gift and, wiping the mouth-piece on his sleeve, began smoking desperately. The warrior, uttering a guttural remark which was lost on Motier, stalked from the lodge. As his back disappeared through the doorway, another priest, of fiercer aspect than the first, galloped in and went through antics similar to those which had led Motier to question the sanity of his predecessor. Thus did the ceremony continue until Motier had smoked five rank and reeking pipes, and had listened to the howling of five hideous barbarians. Then the ritual came to a close with a discordant chorus from the quintette of priests; and the prisoner, after two long hours of smoking and watching, was again left to meditate in solitude upon the blessings of Indian hospitality and the discomforts of a mouth parched and dried with the concentrated essence of a lifetime's portion of tobacco-smoke.

Soon, however, the sound of a statelier chant came from the outer air, gaining in intensity as it approached. At the door of the lodge the song ceased; a youth with a flaming torch came into the room and lit a pile of brushwood that lay beneath the smoke-hole in the centre of the roof; then, as the fire brightened,

a score of chiefs and warriors entered in solemn silence, and took their places on the great mat beyond the circle in which the priests had danced. After them came the people of the village, men, women and children, all observing the strictest silence.

When the spectators were seated, two young women brought in Motier's long wished-for breakfast, and spread at his feet the meats and the corn-cakes of his daily fare and a dozen little delicacies appropriate to the present ceremonial occasion. Knowing that he must eat what was given him, Motier made a brave start, studiously refraining from looking toward the men of the council, and forcing down everything which had been laid before him.

As Du Val breakfasted, the council went into executive session. Motier heard speeches and comments, and more speeches and further comments. At first these meant nothing to him except a most annoying noise; but as the argument grew warmer he began to distinguish between the voices, and soon reduced the number of active participants to two men.

Of these speakers, one would have been an orator of world-wide fame had he spoken a language which the world could have understood. Motier had never heard a voice which told so much in the rise and fall of its tones. The man's utterance was at times quick and impassioned, and again low and quiet, with sometimes an undercurrent of menace and bitterness which told Motier that this chieftain was the one who spoke against him.

The other voice was that of Tetah; always slow and deliberate, but as deep and as musical as the one

which had sounded first. It was the voice of one whose place was high in the councils of the people, and it impressed the captive with a respect that bore its fruit in the quiet confidence that this advocate would stand between him and death.

When Motier had finished his repast the tall warrior refilled and lit one of the long pipes, and Motier again resigned himself to a season of smoking, contemplating meanwhile the peculiar assemblage of which he was the centre. The chiefs and the warriors were puffing at their pipes and giving stolid attention to the one whose voice seemed so threatening to Motier. This man was tall and magnificently formed. His face was painted blue on the one side and white on the other, and his chest bore a great yellow emblem like a bright-rayed sun with human features marked upon it. He spoke with frequent gestures, and Motier saw that when his voice was lowest he pointed to the wounded Usquaughne, who lay upon his litter between Motier and the warrior council. Once he turned toward the prisoner and gave voice to such a fierce denunciation that Motier, looking at him through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, wished that he might get the fellow out into the open and make him swallow his whole heathen vocabulary.

When the prosecutor had concluded, he returned to his place upon the mat and, taking a pipe from the hand of a youth, resumed his smoking. Motier glanced toward Tetah; but the chief remained silent and motionless.

At this juncture another Indian entered the lodge and crossed to the space in front of the captive. He

was of slight build, but seemed as lithe and wiry as a catamount. His head, shaven to the scalp-lock, bore its nodding crown of colored feathers, and his face was painted in great cross-wise stripes of green and yellow. A mantle of embroidered green cloth swung from his shoulders to the ground, and above the hand which held its folds together glistened the mate to the bracelet which Sequa had given to Motier. The youth stood with respectful mien, his eyes resting upon the blue and white features of the accusing chieftain.

Then began the examination of the prisoner, the men of the council asking questions of the interpreter, who in turn was expected to translate them to the captive. As the youth turned to Motier with the first inquiry, the green mantle parted and revealed the swelling ruffles of the shirt-front which Doctor Boggs' servant had mourned as lost. At this mark of identity Motier stared with a satisfaction that he found difficult to conceal.

"No call my name," said the youth. "Cherokee got quick ear."

Tetah, who must have understood his grandson's English, made no sign of betrayal.

"How did you find me?" asked Motier, with studied gravity.

Tonta turned to the council and gave some fictitious answer to the first question. The accusing warrior spoke again.

Tonta turned to Motier. "Big Hat tell me — him Herman. Can my greatfather help Caiheek?"

"No," answered Motier, "only by having Captain Neale or one of his men killed in my place; which I cannot permit."

"Cap'n bad man — Caiheek good. Let Indian take Cap'n — Caiheek go."

"No; I cannot do it."

Tonta again made an answer to the warrior's question. "Maybe save Caiheek," he said, pretending to translate the council's third query. "Wait — see."

"Who is the fellow with the white and blue face?" asked Motier.

"No talk so much," cautioned Tonta. "That Ocebee."

As Tonta gave the concluding answer to the council, a jingle of tiny bells sounded in the doorway, and the noseless medicine-man came into the lodge and took his place beside the interpreter. The men questioned him closely, and his answers seemed to give great delight to the spectators. Tomahawks and knives were drawn; one youth brought forth from beneath a bench a bundle of pine splinters; another bent forward and stealthily drew out a drum; while still another went through a vivid pantomime with a stick weighted at the end with a stone as large as a man's head.

Motier, seeing that his position had become interesting, took advantage of a moment when the lodge was filled with the hubbub of voices. "What's the excitement?" he whispered to Tonta.

The Indian answered without turning his head. "Medicine-man say Usquaughne die if Caiheek live — pale-face trouble sick man spirit. Ocebee say Caiheek die."

"Ocebee is a very pleasant gentleman," murmured Motier.

When the commotion was at its height, Tetah, commanding silence with a wave of the hand, rose to his feet. Tonta stepped forward and asked a question. The circle of warrior chiefs nodded in assent. Stepping to Motier's side the youth translated the old man's verdict. Motier, watching the chief's gestures, could readily supply the words which Tonta could not render in English.

"My brothers," said Tetah, drawing his robes about him, "the pale-face who raised his hand against the wise and strong Usquaughne once wore the red coat of the warriors of the Great Wolf. But this man's heart was the heart of an eagle; and, when he saw that the Great Wolf spilled the blood of his own brothers, he took off the red coat and slept no more within the tents of the wolf-dogs.

"The Eagle Heart is the friend of Tetah and of Tetah's people. When he raised his hand to slay our brother, he did not know that Usquaughne was a warrior of the Cherokees. The wise and mighty Ocebee and his brother, the young brave Awahonk, gave their word to Wottame-Possa, the Great-Hat chief, that the pale-face would live. Let the great warrior of the Cherokees remember his word, and ask of the pale-face what will he that we should do with him."

Tonta bent closer to Motier. "Where picture Wallannah?" he asked, quickly.

Motier reached into his inside pocket. The miniature was the only thing which had escaped the plunder at his capture.

Tonta stepped forward and spoke a few words.

Motier caught the name of Yaunocca, which he knew to be the enchanted mountain, and that of Wallannah, which now sounded like music in his ears. Then the young Indian held out the miniature.

A fierce discussion followed. Tetah, reaching out, took the picture from Tonta's hand. "If Wallannah Manita can heal the bleeding wounds of Usquaughne," he said, "the Eagle Heart can go again to the lodges of his people."

"But if Usquaughne die?" asked Ocebee, with an exultant ring in his voice.

"Usquaughne still lives," was the quiet response.

The drum and the pine splinters, and the tomahawks and the war-club were slipped back to their places.

Ocebee's face was not pleasant to Motier's eyes; but the captive returned the warrior's glare with a look that made the Indian's fingers twist nervously about the handle of his tomahawk. However, the savage attempted no violence, for he was puzzled to know what treatment to accord a man who had carried the picture of a goddess in his coat pocket.

CHAPTER XXV

Wallannah Manita

AFTER a dinner which Motier did not enjoy, his appetite being impaired by his heavy breakfast and by the sickening effects of the excessive smoking of crude tobacco, the march to Yaunocca began. The captive, with hands bound behind him, walked after Usquaughne's litter, and the savage who had brought him the pipes in the council lodge held the end of Motier's bonds. Twelve warriors formed the guard, and Ocebee marched at their head.

Motier noticed first of all the absence of his friends. Tetah was not of the procession, nor was Tonta; while Ocebee and his brother, both of whom Motier regarded as enemies, seemed in unrestricted authority. One feature of decided interest to Du Val was the medicine-man's evident uncertainty of the wounded warrior's bodily condition; for the rattle of the chinchone seemed many times to have ceased. Motier observed that on several such occasions, when the gourd gave forth no sound and the medicine-man bent in great concern over his patient, the fingers of the Cherokees caressed with eager fondness the handles of their tomahawks. From this Motier knew that when Usquaughne's heart stopped beating his own death would follow closely after.

They travelled slowly and with frequent stops, and at nightfall camped beside a stream at the foot of the mountains. Motier was unbound while he ate his supper, and also during the hour which followed and in which he smoked Ocebee's brother's extra pipe. After that, and until he lay down to sleep, he amused himself by watching the savages telling of their deeds of valor in the hunt and on the battle-field; for he could see by their gestures the trend of the stories which they told.

He was awakened early in the morning. Tonta had told him that his second sun would set among the mountains of the great Manita; and he knew that but a few hours would pass before his fate should be known.

The region which they entered before even the early mists had left the valleys brought to Du Val's mind the Alpine borderland of far-away France. Great rugged peaks towered high above the undulating foothills; and here and there the long downward slope of a pine-bristling mountain lost itself in the grassy level of the plain below. Sometimes from the brink of a great precipice they could look across a wide valley to range after range of mountains, dark and gloomy in the middle distance and running the scale of the greens and the purples and the blues until the furthest of them merged into the soft-hued sky and, in airy, shimmering haze, were lost to the eye.

As they marched up through the pathless woods each step brought to Motier's eyes a new and a more splendid picture, and he felt glad that he had lived to see these things; but each time the rattle of the

chinchone reminded him that the life in which he rejoiced was the most uncertain thing in the world. A consumptive can look forward resignedly to the day when his own lungs will cease their working; but it takes a man of iron nerve to stand in the pride of his strength, and know that his young and vigorous life must be measured by the length of that of another, and that other a man whose lung has been perforated by a ridiculously great leaden slug. Yet Motier's courage never faltered; for, though he loved life as few men do, he feared death as little as any.

As they journeyed on they climbed higher and higher among the wooded peaks and in the afternoon the breeze died away, leaving behind it a perfect calm. The air was close and oppressive, and the sun shone like a disk of molten copper in a dull grey sky. Motier's limbs seemed heavy and nerveless, and his breathing grew short and labored. The birds stopped their singing in the forest trees, and the buzzard and the eagle came down from the humid upper air and soared listlessly over the low valleys. The Cherokee warriors looked often about them, and ever and anon glanced with uneasy eyes at the sun and the hazy sky.

Marching slowly onward the party reached a wide bare ledge projecting many feet from the wall of rock that mounted a sheer hundred feet above it. Beneath this shelf, so far below that its music was lost before it reached the ledge, a mountain stream dodged hither and thither among the great bowlders of the chasm. The tops of the tall pines that stood within this gorge reached but a third of the way to the ledge, and looked

like tiny sprigs of evergreen beside a winding ribbon of silver. Across the canyon loomed the cliff which had kissed this other in the days before the earth had opened and split them apart; and far ahead the two great walls drew so close together that the space between them seemed but a narrow slit of light in the black rock. Through and above this crevice, and a long way off, rose a straight-walled peak of dull brown-grey, looming up like a giants' cathedral, but bare of spire or buttress or window. Behind this rock stirred a ragged bank of cloud, frayed and torn at its edges.

The eyes of the Indians were fixed upon that cloud; and, watching with them, Motier saw that it rose with great rapidity, spreading wider as it came, and varying in hue as it grew in size, until a great segment of the heavens was obscured by a surging mass of dull brownish green, tattered and yellow-fringed on its eastward border and seared and riven by dull red lightnings running serpent-wise up and down and across its angry expanse. Like a great curtain it crept across the face of the sun, and its vast shadow stalked over the valleys and the lowlands, wiping out the light and the color and the warmth like a brush of black sweeping across a brightly-painted landscape. The yellow and the olive of the cloud changed to a sooty black, touched here and there with whirling eddies of sickly grey; and the lightnings went from red to pink and from pink to orange and from orange to white, with dazzling after-gleamings of purple and yellow and emerald green. Then came the whistling wind, howling down the gorge like a pack of hungry wolves; and after that

the sullen rumbling of the thunder as it rose and fell with a growling that seemed the voice of a menacing Manitou. The storm came onward. The whole vault above them darkened with the rolling clouds. The landscape, dull and lifeless, took upon itself the gloom of night. A vivid flash of lightning writhed down the face of the opposite cliff, and with it came a roar like the voice of a thousand cannon. The Indians huddled together with upturned faces that paled beneath their paint. Another jagged flash cleft the cloud and, with a ripping crash, shot with a great twist to the depths of the ravine. Then, when the lightnings gleamed about them, and the great stony walls quivered with the echo of the thunder, and the north wind shrieked down the night-dark gap, a narrow beam of sunlight pierced through the gloom and, marked like a long white finger against the hellish blackness of the clouds, fell upon the cathedral rock, touching it with an hundred colors, until it gleamed like an agate hanging before a broad black velvet background.

A low wail came from the Cherokee warriors, and, as they broke into a crooning chant, Ocebee strode to the edge of the rocky shelf and, raising his head, stretched his arms toward the sun-kissed peak. "Yaunocca! Yaunocca!" he cried, his voice ringing loud above the noise of the warring elements. "Wallannah! Manita!" The wind picked up his cry and swept it down the valley of darkness. But Ocebee's arms were still outstretched, and his lips moved with words that Motier could not hear.

The peak dropped back again into the gloom; the finger of light crept through the crevice at the canyon's

upper end, and, moving across the shadowed hollow, blazed a path of green and brown across the forest and the rocks. Then it shone for a moment on the rim of the ledge on the cliff's wall. Ocebee's lifted arms and bare shoulders gleamed in the light, his war-lock with its blood-tipped white feathers nodded to the sun, and he stood for a moment the only dash of color in the black-domed landscape, his form painted vividly against a background as dark as the depths of an Inferno. Then the light went out like a candle in the wind; a lightning flash snaked slant-wise down the gorge; and with a sudden uplifting quiver the ledge trembled beneath their feet. Once, twice, thrice, and a last and terrible fourth time, did the earth reel and the cliffs rock to the base; but through it all came the wild song of Ocebee, and his dark figure stood motionless against the darker sky. Great pieces of stone crashed down the walls of the canyon; and one huge rock hurtled down from the cliff's very top and with a great leap struck upon the ledge and took a jagged bite from its outer rim, then whirled to the depths below. The Indians, save that one who stood alone on the chasm's brink, fell upon their faces and wept and groaned with terror. But Ocebee, like a gloomy statue, still held his arms outstretched and sang his song to the Wallannah, Manita of Yaunocca.

The storm passed over them, and with its going came the courage of the Cherokees. The clouds swept on toward the east, and the sun again shone over the landscape. The party moved onward, winding its way along the rock-ledged side of the cliff. It was near the close of day when, emerging from the mouth of the

deep-cut gorge, the Indians and their prisoner entered an open glade at the foot of the great cathedral rock. The warriors, with one accord, stopped and gazed up to the dizzy height of the pinnacle. Motier raised his eyes with theirs. High on the brow of the beetling cliff, strongly marked against the purpling sky, stood a woman clad in white, her long black hair and her loose flowing robes waving lightly in the breeze. As they watched her she turned and pointed one hand toward the west. "Ouke Yappa me!" came the sound of her voice, floating down like music. As the tones died away a low rumble came from the clouds that, far away, carried the storm oceanward. Then the woman was gone, whither Motier could not tell; for it seemed as though the white-clad figure had dissolved into mist.

The little band of men walked a half-mile 'round the base of the precipice, clambering over great fragments of rock which had fallen, perhaps in ages past, perhaps in the earthquake of the last hour, from the wall beside them. Then, sweeping about a rocky pilaster, they came into an open space that stretched level as a ball-room floor within a circling bowl of cliffs. Near the northern edge of this level sward a great pool whirled and foamed in a deep rock-girt basin as broad and as long as the council lodge of the Cherokees. Into this poured a foaming stream as wide as a city street, dashing down the mountain side over a dozen rocky terraces and filling the air with its rushing music. After its moment's rest in the pool, the stream, with a new-found force, swept down the left of the tabled green and roared its way into a gloomy gulf

that seemed the gaping mouth of darkness. Against the cliff stood a vine-covered log cabin, its timbers glistening mossy green between the openings in the ivy and the woodbine. Between this hut and the rock-ribbed pool nestled a little spring, whose sulphured borders mingled with the emerald of the overhanging grass, and whose waters trickled down to the seething basin of the torrent.

The bearers laid the litter with its wounded occupant close by the spring; then, with Motier as a centre, the Indians formed a semi-circle, all facing the hut. In a moment the door opened, and the white-clad woman stood before them. Motier saw that she was Wallannah, and he did not wonder at her influence over the savage mind; for she had come from the top of the cliff, and it seemed to Du Val that nothing but a spirit could make that descent and live. Yet she was there.

Wallannah, seeming not to notice the dark row of warriors, gazed long and fixedly at Motier. He saw that her features were those of the painted miniature; but he missed something in the look of the woman's eyes which the artist had placed in his portrayal. The expression, though none the less noble, lacked the womanly tenderness of the face upon the ivory. The look was cold, and without a trace of sympathy. But as Motier watched her, and as she watched him, the face changed; her eyes grew softer, and she bent forward with an eager interest. Then, raising one hand with a gesture of authority, she spoke quickly two Indian words. Motier felt the cold touch of steel upon his wrists, and his hands were freed.

Then the Manita spoke, in stately old-time English. "What hast thou to say for thyself?"

Motier moved a step nearer. "I am a traveler in the mountains, seeking one who is a friend. I was led into an ambush and captured by a band of Indians, among whom were the warriors who bring me here."

"I know," she said, coldly. "I learned that from the spirits that inhabit Yaunocca; but how couldst thou, who hast passed unharmed through fire and water, guard thyself so little as to fall into the hands of Ocebee?"

"I had no knowledge of danger," replied Motier, wondering at her allusion to the "fire and water." "How could I guard against that of which I knew nothing?"

"Thou art but half right," was the answer; "but speak on. Thy voice is music in mine ears: I have heard it in my dreams. Wherefore camest thou over the great water?"

Motier started, and something like awe came over him. The woman seemed to know more of his life than did he himself.

"Speak!" she commanded.

Motier forced a smile. "I came to visit my father's friends," he said.

"And thy name?"

"Motier Du Val."

"I know it not. Art sure thou speakest truly?"

Motier raised his head a little stiffly. "I have told you my name," he answered, with a quick flash in his eyes.

She smiled: "Nay, I cannot doubt thee; but the name fitteth not thy tongue. Thou hadst a message?"

"I had a letter: it was taken from me by my captors."

"Nay, not that," she said, eagerly. "Thou hadst a message from him who went to the spirit land: hast thou tidings of him?"

Motier was perplexed. "No," he answered, shaking his head, "I know none such as you indicate."

The cold gleam returned to her eyes. "Thou canst keep nothing from me," she said, shortly. "There is blood on thy hands: look thou to it." Then, turning from him, she approached Ocebee.

The Cherokee met her gaze with something like fear in his eyes.

She spoke in the warrior's own language. "Why seek ye Wallannah?" she asked, coldly.

"We come for judgment, O Manita," was the Indian's reply.

"Against this youth? Hast thou not already judged him? Let Ocebee speak."

"Know then, O Wallannah," responded the warrior, in the same musical tones that had thrilled the council lodge. "The Great Wolf came with the thunder of his roaring to devour the friends of the red man. While the Good Spirit slept the Wolf feasted on our white brothers and left their bones to bleach by the sands of the Alamance. The Wottame-Possa, our Big-Hat brother, a mighty chief of our pale-face friends, met us and turned us back to our lodges. He went to the mountains, but wolf-dogs were on the marks of his footsteps. Wottame-Possa bade us drive them to the

plains or take them to our wigwams, but not to shed their blood; that we might hold them between us and our enemies, and our voices be bold when we talked at our council fires. This pale-face youth was with them. We sprang upon them like the panthers of the forest; and we seized them all. But Usquaughne returned not with us rejoicing. We bore him bleeding to his women and his children. The pale-face youth we would have spared; but on his hands is the blood of Usquaughne; and the blood of the great and wise Usquaughne cries for vengeance."

"Blood for blood: thus reads the law," said the prophetess, regarding Ocebee with eyes that seemed to look beyond him.

"The Great Spirit speaks in the words of Wallannah," responded the savage; and a chorus of approval came from the dark group about him. "We will take the pale-face again to our lodge."

Wallannah shook her head. "Not while Usquaughne still liveth," she answered. "He hath done dark deeds; he hadst killed the pale-face, but the pale-face wast quicker than Usquaughne. But when the warrior dieth, remember then thy law: Blood for blood."

"Does Usquaughne die? Cannot Wallannah heal him?"

"Usquaughne dieth even now: the chinchone soundeth low."

"Give to us Usquaughne, and the pale-face may go. Usquaughne is a warrior, and the wolf-dog will never darken our lodges again. Cannot Wallannah call upon the Great Spirit to heal Usquaughne?"

She turned her head and looked toward the spring. "Usquaughne is dead," she said, wearily. "The chinchone soundeth no more."

Confirming her words, the rattle stopped its noise and the medicine-man broke into a low wailing chant.

Ocebee sprang toward Motier. "Give us now the youth," he cried fiercely. "Give us the pale-face: we must appease the spirit of Usquaughne."

"Life for life! Thou knowest the law. But why so quick? Hast thou no pity for that young man? Wouldst thou destroy him in the promise of his youth and strength?"

"The arm of Usquaughne can no more bend the bow against the enemies of his people: his swift feet can no longer race with the deer that his lodge be filled with meat."

Wallannah the judge had turned into Wallannah the woman. "Wouldst thou darken the light of those eyes? I see no hatred in them: the look is proud and fearless."

"The eyes of Usquaughne were as bright. They were like the eagle's searching for his prey: their look too was proud and fearless; but the pale-face made them close in death."

"Wouldst thou, Ocebee, stop the life of that strong heart?"

"The blood of our warrior was as red, and his heart was as strong and as happy."

"He is a comely youth," she said, turning her eyes toward the captive. Then in Motier's own tongue, "Can it be that one whom fire and water hath spared must die by a death of torture!"

Du Val gave no sign, nor moved a muscle of his face.

Ocebee fingered his tomahawk with impatience. "Does Wallannah forget Ocebee and his warriors?" he asked. "The law is spoken: give us our captive, that we may bury our dead." He moved toward Du Val.

Wallannah stayed him with a move of her hand. "Touch him at thy peril!" she cried. "Back to thy place. I have spoken the law; but thy law is not his. Let the Great Spirit speak."

"The Great Spirit of the Indian, or the Great Spirit of the pale-face?" asked Ocebee, with a little sneer.

"They are one!" was the answer. "Rememberest not that He made the earth to tremble when thou camest on the way to me? I must seek His will."

Ocebee dropped back into his place among the warriors, and folding his arms across his painted chest, waited for Wallannah to do as she had said.

"The fire!" called the Manita. "Kindle thou the fire!"

A dwarfed negress, seeming to rise from the ground, bent over a rocky altar by the cabin's end, and lighted the pile of wood that lay upon it. As the flames crept up and licked about the dried faggots, Wallannah, now a priestess in the eyes of the savages, began dropping handfuls of herbs and gums and spices into the flames. The smoke rolled upward, dark and heavily scented, and as it rose the woman watched its writhings as though she read in those fantastic shapes an answer to the invocation which she murmured. Her voice was at first low; but as her excitement increased, her dark eyes kindled, her face flushed, and with

slow, sweeping gestures she broke into a loud, wild chant.

As Wallannah's voice echoed and re-echoed about the rocky ampitheatre, another storm began to rise; and one great cloud from the southwest drew toward another that came up out of the west. The chant rose higher as the lightning brightened and the thunder deepened. Then, when the heavens were aglow and the air shook with the roar of the storm, Wallannah stopped her singing.

There was one dark, silent moment when the clouds met overhead. Then, slowly but certainly, the medicine-man's chinchone again took up its rattling. The light of Usquaughne's life was returning. Surprise was marked on every face save only Wallannah's.

The Manita raised her hands to the heavens, and gave one quick, loud call. The clouds were riven by a flash that blinded with its glare. A roaring, splitting crash shook the air and the rocks, and a shower of splinters fell from the oak tree by the spring. Usquaughne, seared and marked beyond all human semblance, was dashed from his litter and fell upon the ground many feet away.

Ocebee and his brother, followed by the other warriors, rushed to the dead man's side. With a quick glance Motier saw his way clear to the forest. He turned and made a step toward the woods. Freedom seemed within his reach. But a light step sounded behind him; a pair of strong arms were bound about him; and with a sudden resistless jerk he was thrown backward into a darkness deeper than the night.

CHAPTER XXVI

A Pair of Dead Indians

DU VAL'S first thought was to spring at his captor's throat and fight for his liberty. A week before he would have acted on the impulse; but now — well, now he knew something of tomahawks and war-clubs, and the knowledge calmed him to discretion. Yielding to the force that pushed him onward through the darkness, he heard the soft closing of a door behind him, and felt a carpet beneath his feet. Then came the creaking of hinges and the closing of a second door, after which he stood beside his captor on a floor of stone, and felt the breath of cool fresh air in his face.

After the closing of the last door, the man who had held Motier's arms loosened his hold; and Du Val heard him make a short step away. Then both stood still. "Wait a moment," said a voice at his elbow, "I must see that she is safe."

Motier gave a great start. "Captain May —"

"H'sh! Not a word!"

For a full minute they kept their silence, hearing nothing but the drip, drip, drip, of water round about them, and the subdued rushing of the cascade outside. Then came a confused sound of wailing, broken suddenly by a fierce yell. And Motier knew that some one had missed him.

One voice rose above the others. The orator of the council lodge was speaking.

Then followed the answer, in Wallannah's clear voice. "What spirit hath seized upon Ocebee?" she demanded, speaking the Cherokee dialect.

Ocebee's reply was loud and fierce. "Wallannah promised blood for blood: where is the pale-face?"

"The Great Spirit hath taken him."

"Not the Great Spirit of the Cherokees!"

"Hath Ocebee forgotten his wisdom? Go thou, and see whose shaft hath stricken Usquaughne."

The savage gave no response.

"The Great Spirit of the pale-face is the Great Spirit of all the earth," Wallannah continued. "He did thunder out of heaven, with hailstones and coals of fire, and He sendeth out His arrows to scatter them that fear Him not. He casteth forth lightnings and destroyeth them. Doth Ocebee hearken?"

"The ears of Ocebee are open." The voice had lost some of its sneering bravado.

"Then hear thou, Ocebee! Because thou hast dared lift thy hand against the judgment of the Highest, that hand shall fail thee in thy greatest need. Because thou hast looked without fear upon the signs of His anger, the fire of thine eyes shall be turned to darkness. Because thou hast spoken foolishly of His justice, thy tongue shall be stiffened in thy mouth. No more shalt thou hurl the weapon against thy foes; no more shall thine eye guide the arrow to its mark; no more shall thy voice be heard in the councils of thy people. The clouds that spake with the thunder shall pass away in the night and the sun will rise on the morrow, but it

will not rise for Ocebee nor for one other. Thou shalt have no grave among thy people; for the earth shall swallow thee up; and thy face shall no more be seen among thy warriors. So the Spirit telleth Wallannah!"

A deep silence followed.

Motier felt the grasp of a hand on his arm. "All is well," whispered Maynard. "Walk where I lead."

For some moments they went in silence.

"Now, lower your head," said Maynard, after they had walked several rods. "Bend down until you see the light. There, this is the ante-chamber." They were in a spacious cavern lighted by the flickering flame of a lard-lamp hanging from the rocky wall.

Motier grasped his companion's hand. "This is the second time you have helped me in my need," he said. "I cannot tell you how grateful I am."

"Do not try," laughed Maynard, pressing the other's hand. "Come, we cannot stay here." And he led the way down a stone stairway into a well lighted and neatly furnished room. "Sit down," he said, "and tell me how you came into such bad company."

They seated themselves on a long bench, and Motier, after some further expression of his indebtedness to Maynard, told the story of his capture and of the march to Yaunocca. "The rest you know," he concluded.

"Yes; I know all about the rest."

"Well, I do not," was Motier's laughing response. "I'm perplexed and somewhat awe-struck. I have heard much that I cannot understand, and have seen a

great deal that is hard to believe. Who and what is this wonderful Wallannah?"

Maynard turned quickly. "You have not guessed?" he asked, with some surprise.

Motier shook his head.

Maynard rose and paced two or three times before the bench. "This Wallannah," he said, at last, stopping before Motier, "is my wife. You know some of her story?"

"Yes; and a terrible one it is. But I thought Mrs. Maynard dead."

"No. We have lived here for ten years. You and Boggs are the only ones outside our own little circle who know that she is among the living."

"And her health has improved?"

"Yes, day by day. Boggs comes up here occasionally, and I go frequently to see him. We think that she may recover entirely within a few years. But, to change the subject, you said that you knew nothing of your father's message?"

"Not a word. The letter was sealed, and I asked no questions. I was curious to know; for I had heard of no intimacy between you and my father; but, obeying orders, I came as I was bidden."

A slight cloud rested on Maynard's features. "I knew your father years ago," he said, thoughtfully. "And I loved him as a brother; but something, or somebody, came between us. The time is not distant, I hope, when all will be well again."

"It will, if my efforts can avail. Father is a man of violent feeling, and is arbitrary to a remarkable degree; but he seldom nurses a difference."

"Our meeting again lies in the future. When the time comes I know that your father and I will be as we were in the old days."

A shuffling step sounded in the stone stairway. The men turned.

The dwarfed negress stood in the archway. "I done come fer a light, Mars Willum," she said. "Missis is a-comin'." She took one of the lard-lamps and climbed back to the upper room. Both men looked after her. In a few moments she returned, and with her was Wallannah.

The stately woman crossed the room and stretched out her arms toward her husband. "William, my king," she murmured, softly. "Thou art here?"

Maynard stepped toward her. "Here, my queen," he said, taking her hands, and smiling into her great eyes.

"Let me look at thee," she said, bending slightly forward. Then, slowly but with a ring of gladness in her voice, "Thine eyes show that thy soul is clear, all clear. Thou art ready should He call thee. Yet a cloud hangeth about thee, my king! I cannot pierce it; but there is a light beyond. If He take thee, dear one, come back here for thy Margaret. The spirits have spoken to Wallannah: danger besets the life of a Maynard; and there is no Maynard here but thee. Watch thou, and pray." She moved away, with bowed head.

While the two talked together, Motier turned, and approaching a rack of arms upon the wall, took down a long, thin rapier of the French pattern. Glancing at the name graven on the hilt he started a little. He

turned to Captain Maynard as Wallannah went toward the door and opened his lips to speak.

They were startled by a sudden cry from Wallannah. "Look! Quick!" she screamed, pointing toward the end of the room.

Maynard jerked Motier to one side. A tomahawk cleft the air and crashed against the wall behind them. Motier looked up quickly. Ocebee and his brother were dashing toward them. Maynard met the younger man half way across the room, and the two grappled and fell to the floor.

Ocebee, with a terrific whoop, rushed upon Motier with a gleaming hunting knife. Quick as a flash Motier's arm and the keen rapier shot forward. There was a little shivering ring as the long blade rasped across the edge of the Indian's knife, then Ocebee sank to the floor with the sword through his heart. Motier hastened to the writhing pair upon the floor. They twisted and turned, first with the one on top, then with the other; but Motier could find no place to strike with his blade, for a thrust that would kill one would kill both.

After the struggle had continued several minutes the captain slowly arose, first on one knee and then to his feet, raising the savage with him. They stood for a moment breast to breast, their arms outstretched in cruciform and the captain's fingers gripped about the red-skin's wrists. In the Indian's right hand was a short sharp knife; but Maynard was unarmed.

Motier would have thrust the savage through where he stood; but the captain bade him leave the man to him. With a quick move Maynard forced the savage's

hands together above his head. Ocebee's brother grinned ferociously, and Motier raised the point of his sword; for it seemed as though a very child could have dropped his hands and struck that knife into Maynard's breast. The Indian tried it; but while his bare arms quivered with the tension of their muscles, Maynard slowly drew their hands more closely together, bearing them down toward his own left shoulder. Motier drew a quick breath, for the knife's point missed the captain's throat by less than an inch. Ocebee's brother, however, failed in compassing that inch. With a sudden move Maynard grasped both the Indian's wrists in his left hand, forced him suddenly backward, and snatching the Cherokee's tomahawk from his belt cleft his skull with a single blow.

When it was over, Maynard turned to Du Val. "It was the only way," he said, with a quiet smile. "We can keep no prisoners here, and had he escaped we should have paid for it with our four lives. But zounds, man! You gave Ocebee a pretty thrust!"

Motier, with a sudden thought, looked across the room: Wallannah and the negress were gone. He made a move toward the archway, but Maynard held him back. "They have gone to secure the door," he said.

"But there is danger," protested Motier.

Maynard smiled. "There were but two of this stamp," he said, pointing to the bodies on the floor. "The others dare not follow."

Suddenly a burst of song came sweeping through the cavern.

"Says Fanning to Frohawk, 'Tis folly to lie,
I rode an old mare that was blind of one eye;
Five shillings in money I had in my purse,
My coat it was patched, but not much the worse;
But now we've got rich, and it's very well known,
That we'll do very well; if they'll let us alone."

Motier looked at Maynard with questioning eyes.

The captain laughed. "A few of my friends, in the Grand Hall," he said; "but I must stop them. Poor fellows, the music of the dying swan! A few songs and the memory of their dead is all that is left to the Regulators." And he hastened through one of the five passages that led from the parlor.

Returning a little later, Maynard brought Husbands and Howell with him. They advanced and shook hands with Du Val.

Husbands crossed to where Ocebee lay with his handsome savage face upturned to the light. "The pitcher went too often to the well," he said, with a sigh; "and a well-aimed stroke it was that broke it. Ocebee was the boldest of his tribe, seeking danger as a lover seeks his love. Life seemed his plaything. He was a bad man, false alike to friend and to foe; but he has sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. 'As he has made his bed, so let him lie.'"

"Your last proverb doesn't fit," remarked Maynard. "I can't keep these fellows on my parlor floor. What shall we do with them?"

Husbands looked up and smiled. "We'll try another proverb," he said. "'He that falls in an evil cause, falls into the devil's frying-pan.' Apply that literally."

"And drop him into the crater, eh? You see," he added, turning to Motier, "this mountain is an extinct volcano. The crater, at the end of that long passage, is roofed now by thousands of tons of rock, but it goes downward to the bottom of everything."

Husbands, hurrying to the Grand Hall, returned with two men, each bearing a flaming torch of light-wood. Then he and Howell lifted the body of the younger warrior and carried it through the passage-way to the crater. Maynard and Motier took Ocebee, and led by their torch-bearer, entered the gloomy tunnel.

Winding through a long passage they finally entered a great vault into which centred many converging caverns. Before them, on a point of rock that extended out into blackness that seemed boundless, stood Husbands and Howell with their torch-bearer. Their figures stood out in bright relief against the gloom, and the torch blazed with vain fury at the darkness which its beams could not dispel.

'Gone?" asked Maynard, as he saw that the Indian's body was not on the rock.

"Miles below — and still going," was Howell's response.

"Is it deep?" asked Motier, after he and Maynard had laid Ocebee on the floor.

"Is it deep?" repeated Howell, with a laugh. "Hell can be no deeper."

"Well," said Husbands, looking down at Ocebee's painted face, "this Cherokee was my friend, if he was the friend of any one. As a brother we mourn him; as an enemy he has our forgiveness. Your grave is

deep, Ocebee; but not so deep that the Great Spirit cannot find you. He, not we, must judge you. Divinney, tie your torch in the Indian's hand. Now, boys, up with him!"

The warrior's length stretched between Howell and the one whom Husbands had called Divinney, and the flaming torch swung from the stiffening hand.

"Dust to dust," said Husbands, solemnly. "Ocebee! our last farewell!"

There was a quick forward movement of two pairs of arms, and from the pit came one fleeting glimpse of a handsome painted face shooting downward. Then amid the silence of a tomb the six men leaned over the abyss and watched. The flame grew smaller and smaller, and smaller still, until it seemed like a spark floating in infinite depths below. Then the light went out, like a fire-fly grown weary in the night.

Husbands' deep voice broke upon the silence. "May God have mercy on his soul," he said. And the men about him murmured something like a quivering Amen.

Motier remembered Ocebee as he had stood but a few hours before on the ledge above the gorge, with his blood-tipped plumes nodding to heaven through the raging storm; and, bitter though their enmity had been, a quick moisture came to his eyes at the thought.

The next morning Maynard came to the couch where Motier had slept. He bore a lamp in his hand, for in the cavern day and night were both alike. Leaving the lamp he returned a half hour later and led Motier to the dining-room.

"We have a splendid house," said Maynard.

"When we outgrow our apartments we have simply to hang a lamp in another of the hundred caverns and thus add another room to our abode. By the by, your Indian friends left at sunrise, carrying Usquaughne with them."

"But won't the whole howling tribe come back to find the two missing ones."

"Come back! Not for all the gold and all the rum in Christendom. They remember what came of Wallannah's prophecy that Ocebee and one other should be swallowed up by the earth, and I doubt if a Cherokee ever comes near Yaunocca again."

After breakfast the two men, leaving Wallannah and her faithful servant in the cavern, passed out into the ampitheatre where the priestess had stood in judgment in the twilight of the day before.

Motier looked across the broad and level green. "What a place for a fight!" he said, pointing to the space between the spring and the basin.

"I have often thought it," answered Maynard, a fire kindling in his dark eyes. Then he pulled at his mustache. "A good spot for you to pull off that Cantwell matter, eh?"

Motier laughed. "Bah! Captain. You and I are too bloodthirsty. We finished two yesterday."

"A case of had-to, my boy. Ocebee seemed hungry for that scalp of yours; and, had you been a second later, his knife would have forestalled your sword."

"Speaking of the sword, Captain; how did you get it?"

"It belonged to my half-brother, a soldier of fortune, but a nobleman by blood and by heart."

"I know that he was," was Du Val's quiet response. "The truest man that ever lived."

A quick light came to Maynard's eyes. "But you did not know him?"

"Yes; I knew him — and loved him."

"And yet you —"

"Loved the woman? Yes — until I knew."

Maynard drew in a quick breath. "Thank God that you found it out!" he said, looking thoughtfully down to the cleft in the gorge. "I knew not how to tell you."

"It is well that you did not," observed Motier, with a touch of sadness in his smile. "In the days before the night we parted a word against her would have meant some serious trouble."

"I knew it, I felt that it would; but I would have faced the trouble. And you, then, are the Frenchman of whom he often spoke?"

"Perhaps. I spent a year with him in England. But I never knew until now that he was your half-brother."

"Yes; he was. His death was a great blow to me. Well, come and take a jaunt about the gully below us. Got my old pistol? Good: it's always well to carry an armory with you in this land."

They spent the morning roaming about the ravines below the cliff, and talking as they walked. Approaching Maynard's home when the sun was high, the captain halted before a ragged pile of rocks, covered with moss and sticks and dead leaves.

Maynard looked at Motier and smiled. "Walk in," he said, waving his hand toward the mass of debris.

Du Val laughed. "First crush in the mountain for

me," he said, looking carelessly at the bank before him. "You outweigh me by ten pounds; shove in the mountain side."

Maynard reached out one hand and pushed upon a projecting rock. The face of the cliff swung in, and Motier, looking through the ragged moss-fringed opening, stared into a dark passageway ending at an oaken door.

"Why, man!" said Du Val, as he entered, "you have a key to the very bowels of the earth. Who would have thought that your rocks and rubbish concealed a door!"

"One man found it several weeks ago. Coming in one night I found a paper right where your feet are now. On it was the message, 'I have found you, but you are safe. Pile some more rocks before your entrance. D. B.'"

"Who was D. B.?"

"Daniel Boone, a hunter. Poor fellow, I fear he was killed in a recent Indian massacre in the country beyond the mountains."

"In that wilderness of Augusta county, in Virginia?"

"The same; but called by the Indians 'Kentucky,' the dark and bloody ground."

They opened the inner door and stepped into the captain's lamp-lit parlor. There Maynard left him.

Motier sat, with legs crossed, in a rustic chair, smoking and looking down at the floor. He had thought much of Alice during the day, and she was in his mind now. There came the memory of her as she had pinned the rose upon his coat; and the thought

of their parting, hitherto a source of amusement to him, began to hurt, as a wound on the field of battle when a man first sees it after an hour's bleeding.

Then came the recollection of Esther's letter, with its statement that Alice had kept the rose. "If she kept it," he reflected, letting the fire die out in his pipe; "if she still keeps it, she must have her reason for doing so. I still keep the thing in my mind; and I must have my reason for that. One reason and one other reason make two reasons; and two reasons mean what?" He stared at the toe of his boot and smiled. "Two reasons mean what?" he repeated, speaking aloud.

"If one is a woman's reason," sounded Maynard's voice at his elbow, "they mean one of two things."

"And they?" asked Motier, rising and relighting his pipe.

"Heaven or hell."

Motier smiled as the memory of the girl in the oaken chair at the table's head came again. "God grant it be the first," he said. And, arm in arm, the two went to the noonday meal.

CHAPTER XXVII

Caged Birds — With a Little Sword Play

TEN men were congregated in the Grand Hall of the caverns. Rednap Howell, the people's poet, and James Hunter and Samuel Divinney, leaders in the fight against the crown, sat around a table on which stood a jug of wine and several glasses, with the fragments of a recent supper. The light of the iron lamp on the wall revealed the bulky form of Herman Husbands sitting upon a rustic seat near the middle of the room; and six others, all of the host of Regulators, reclined upon the floor in various attitudes, listening to the final words of a story which Hunter was telling.

After the discussion which followed the ending of the tale, Hunter spoke again. "Sing us a song, Howell," he cried, thumping on the table for silence.

"I have sung for days like a caged bird," was the poet's response; "but then we still hoped. The hope has died, and the music with it. How can we sing Zion's songs in a strange land? We have hung our harps upon the willows."

"Bah!" growled Husbands, enclouding himself in a great puff of tobacco-smoke. "Rednap, my boy, thank God that we're all here, and make merry for that. 'Fat sorrow is better than lean sorrow.' 'Never fight your own shadow.' Sing the song."

Howell shook his long curls. "What is more to the point," he said, glancing toward the jug. "'It is ill talking with a dry throat,' to use one of your proverbs. Fill the cups, Divinney."

"Captain Hunter, a toast!" called Husbands.

"Willingly," responded Hunter, rising with a filled glass in his hand. "Since we have been branded as traitors for resisting a tyrannous and oppressive governor, let us set ourselves aright. I propose, his Majesty King George — God bless him!"

"Drink it not!" shouted Husbands, starting to his feet.

The men put down their glasses. "Why not? Are we indeed traitors?"

"No; but rebels, perhaps. Remember, friends, that our grievances went to the very steps of the throne, and were sent back to Tryon. Our rights are disregarded: we can acknowledge no rights that are not reciprocal. We complain of Tryon, and our complaint displeases the king because 'his Excellency,' William, is a royal favorite. 'Love me love my dog.' The two are one and the same to us. We cannot love the dog, why should we give our blessing to the master who sets him upon us. The truth may as well come out: which of you here can lay his hand over his heart and say before God that he loves King George of England? Where is one man to say it?" He glared about the room. No one answered.

"I knew it," continued Husbands, exultantly. "There is no man here so craven as to lick the foot that gives him the kick. And I tell you, brothers, there are ten hundred thousand hearts in America

ready to respond to the truth I have spoken. A few more acts of royal tyranny, and the people will be king!"

The men burst into a cheer.

"I amend my toast," cried Hunter. "To the sovereign people!"

"I am with you!" And Husbands crossed to the table.

"To the people — God give 'em what they want!" shouted Howell.

"To the people," yelled Divinney. "May their powder never fail!"

And the men on the floor joined in the cry, "To the people!"

Silence reigned while the toast was drunk.

After a full minute Howell spoke to Husbands. "But the time is not yet," he said, brushing back the hair from his eyes. "Where do you go to wait for this day?"

Husbands answered him. "I? I must go home — or to Sandy Creek, for I have no home — and arrange to move my family to some place of temporary safety."

"Openly or in disguise?" asked Hunter.

"Openly. The governor and his soldiers have gone back by this time. Further caution is unnecessary."

A welcoming murmur sounded through the hall. Captain Maynard stood in the archway. "Room for me?" he asked, moving forward.

A laugh went around the circle. "Room for the host!" some one shouted. And Maynard sat by the side of Hunter.

The room again rang with the speeches of the patriots, and the air was filled with little clouds of smoke from their pipes.

Suddenly a voice sounded above theirs. "Who keeps house?"

The men started to their feet, and Howell and Hunter reached for their pistols. A man whose age was somewhere beyond thirty-five stood in the doorway. His sinewy form was clad in the garb of the mountaineer, his rifle-butt rested on the floor, and his face wore a frank, cheery smile.

"Who is he?"

"How did he get here?"

"What's his business?"

The clear eyes never wavered and the firm thin lips changed in no way from their smile as the hunter heard these questions. "Evenin'!" he said, saluting.

Husbands advanced. "Evening, stranger! You are — Hello, Dan! I vow I did not know you. We'd heard you were dead. Gentlemen, my old friend, Daniel Boone."

"Give him the grip," cried Howell.

Boone, led by Husbands, came to the knot of men who stood by the table, and shook hands with them all.

Maynard spoke. "I've never met you before, Mr. Boone," he said, with a smile. "But you did me the honor of leaving your card some weeks ago."

Boone laughed, showing a row of strong white teeth. "I recollect," he said, with a twinkle in his eyes. "You kept me from killin' a deer that day. I had my bead on 'im, when you came along atween us. You

were holdin' your head down, an' didn't see me. Then I saw where you went an' noticed a little piece of moss was off one of your hinges. I stuck another in its place an' dropped my note inside the door."

"I met you once," said Divinney, "near your home, on the Watauga."

"I remember. You were with a surveyin' party. But that was three years ago — before I left for the Dark and Bloody Ground."

"And what is the news from the place you call Kentucky?" asked Husbands. "Did Stuart come with you? and Finley? and Cool? and Holden? and Monay? I felt it was a last farewell when you left old Pennsylvania."

"I've left all the boys in Kentucky," said Boone, sadly. "Stuart fell beside me in an Indian fight. He was the last of 'em all; for the others had disappeared before that, imprisoned or massacred by the Indians. But Kentucky is a glorious country, for all that. I'm goin' back as soon as I can get my fam'ly ready. You can be free there. Come with us, Husbands!"

Husbands smiled. "We will think of it," he said. "But your pictures are none of the brightest. Now, tell us, what brings you here to-night?"

Boone threw one leg across a corner of the table and sat there, swinging his moccasined foot. "I've been marchin' twenty miles with a company of light horse," he said, carelessly. "They pressed me into service to guide 'em to the mountain."

A growl of wrathful surprise came from the men about him.

"What are the troops?" asked Maynard, quickly.

"Men from New Hanover, of Colonel Ashe's command."

"What are they after?"

"Lookin' for Captain Neale."

"Nothing else?"

"Perhaps; they mentioned your name and that of Husbands. That's why I came here to tell you. My conscience don't trouble me, for they forced me into service. They made me promise to get back by sunrise."

"How many are there?"

"Twelve, and an Indian guide. I don't know what sort of Indian he is, for he said nothin' in my hearin' an' kept his face hid by his blanket. They've got your old friend Witten with 'em, too."

"Witten!" shouted Hunter. "Boys, here's that we steal Witten!"

"Steal him it is," answered the chorus.

Motier came into the hall, and approaching Boone each was made known to the other.

"Get up your sword-arm muscle once more," said Howell, as Motier moved to his side.

"What's on hand? Cherokees?"

"Naw! Cherokees are gentlemen: these fellows are the governor's soldiers."

"And therefore not gentlemen? I was a governor's soldier once."

"Cæsar! I forgot that. Poetic license, you see. I will make amends."

"Keep your amends. Let's get together with Boone and the best of your people, and see what we can do."

They acted immediately, and a council of war was

held around the table. As one of its results, two of the men were put on guard, one at the cabin, the other at the secret entrance.

Motier was in the parlor, buckling on a sword-belt with a scabbard that fitted Jack Ashburne's blade. "If it comes to aught," he said, affectionately patting the cold steel, "serve me well, for Jack's sake." And he smiled as the blade grated a little on its way to its place.

Suddenly a man dressed as a hunter burst into the parlor with the cabin-guard behind him. He stopped short as he caught the glance of Motier's eyes.

Du Val laughed lightly. "Have no fear, Witten," he said, assuringly. "I'm no longer a king's officer. Go into the other room: they want you there." He followed the hunter, and sent the guard back to his post.

A suppressed cheer greeted Witten as he broke into the hall.

"They're a-comin', boys," he said. "The hull gang of 'em. Run half yer men out the front way, an' half — But, Gawd! Thar ain't no other way!"

Maynard laughed. "And half the other way," he said, with a smile. "For there is another."

"Then, cut yer army in two and chase half each way; then ketch 'em when they comes inter the place by the cabin."

That was the plan, and so they carried it out. In fifteen minutes a corporal with his guard, led by the blanketed Indian, filed past the secret door and went toward the cabin. As they passed from sight Hunter with six men, crept out behind them. When the squad reached the cabin door, they stood a moment and the

corporal and the Indian spoke a few words together. Suddenly, a swarm of Regulators rushed from the hut, and the other detachment attacked them from the rear. Two or three shots were fired into the air; but the victory was a bloodless one.

The soldiers were surrounded and disarmed, and Maynard, laughing and chatting merrily, began to parley with the corporal with a view to paroling him and his men upon their oath to keep his whereabouts secret for a month.

While the captors stood at rest in a circle about the royal soldiery, Motier, apart from the others, saw that the blanketed Indian was not among the prisoners. A suspicion of treachery came to his mind. Stepping back while Maynard talked with the corporal, Duval, loosening his sword in its sheath, crept slowly along beside the cliff wall. Suddenly by the very brink of the pool he saw a dark figure with a great bundle in its arms stealing toward the oak by the spring.

Silently he followed until the man reached the tree and laid his burden on the ground. Then Motier saw the pale face of Wallannah above the Indian's blanket, which was wrapped about her. Her eyes were closed and she looked as one in a faint. Keeping the oak between himself and the savage, Motier crept closer. Once he peered around the tree-trunk. The Indian's face was turned from him; but he saw that he wore a buckskin hunting suit with fringed leggings. A sudden move revealed a long sword hanging from his belt.

Motier gasped with surprise. "An Indian with a rapier!" he muttered. "It passes me!" Keeping

behind the tree, he took off his sword-belt and laid it on the grass. Then, stripping off his coat, he rolled up his right shirt-sleeve. He stooped and drew Jack Ashburne's sword from its sheath, and, passing around the tree, noiselessly crossed the grass to where the Indian stood looking down the valley.

Du Val placed his hand on the man's shoulder. "Surrender that woman to me," he said, in a low voice.

The man turned on his heel and Motier, scanning the painted features by the moonlight, saw who the fellow was.

The disguised man uttered a low laugh. "Well, by God!" he said, "I've got you at last!"

"Not yet," and Motier smiled grimly as he said it. "Draw!"

The steel rang as Jake Cantwell, unbuckling his belt let the scabbard slip from his blade. Then, kicking the belt across the green, he raised his rapier. The swords met with a shivering ring.

Motier spoke. "Will you surrender her to me?" he asked, coldly.

"She's mine now, and she'll stay mine. If you call the other fellows, I'll kill her before they get here."

"Guard yourself!" was the curt reply. And those were the last words, save only three, spoken between them.

From the first touch of the steel Motier knew that he had underestimated the powers of his enemy. Cantwell was heavier and stronger, and his arm and his sword both outreached Motier's. But Du Val was cool and calm, while Cantwell's face was flushed and a little line of foam marked where his lips parted.

The fight was a fast and a hot one. Du Val was forced to the defensive, and as their blades clashed and clicked and shivered and as spark after spark flew from their contact, Cantwell slowly bore him toward the rock-girt pool. Step by step they went, until Motier could hear the hissing of the torrent's bubbling foam as it broke into the still waters of the basin behind him. Yet, as he parried thrust after thrust and Cantwell's long blade came no nearer to his white shirt-front, Motier's lips formed in the half-smile which had played upon them that day in the wood when this same man had fired upon him from behind a tree.

Suddenly a yell came from the group by the cabin. Cantwell muttered a growling curse. The Regulators and their captives, the latter bound by their parole, rushed across the sward. Du Val, still parrying Cantwell's terrific thrusts, heard Maynard's voice.

"Leave them alone," the captain shouted. "A fair fight for them both!" And the men to the number of over a score formed in a line, watching the two whose swords gleamed and clashed in the moonlight.

At last they stood, Motier with his heel upon the pool's edge, his arm throbbing with weariness, and Cantwell making a final effort to drive him into the depths of the basin. Du Val wavered a little. A murmur came from the crowd. The Frenchman's right foot raised a little from the ground, and his other heel was slowly slipping on the brink of the ledge.

Cantwell laughed under his breath. He made another thrust. "After you,—Wallannah!" he snarled. But in his moment of exultation he wavered in his guard. A sudden gleam came to Motier's eyes. He

gave a quick lunge and the point of his sword ripped through Cantwell's throat, and cut off the fellow's laugh half way.

Motier stepped over Cantwell's body and approached Maynard. "She is there by the spring," he said, pointing toward the oak

Maynard looked up in surprise. "Who?" he asked.

"Wallannah. Go and see."

Maynard rushed across the grass and Motier, bowing to the circle of men, strode over to get his coat and belt. Then he crossed to where the captain held his wife's head upon his knee.

"She is better now," Maynard said, softly. "Was that fellow carrying her away?"

"He was."

"H'm! I think I begin to see."

Motier, wiping his sword upon the grass, looked inquiringly at the captain.

But Maynard did not explain what he had begun to see. "You did your work well, my boy: I never saw a prettier fight. But, heavens! I thought he had you."

Motier shrugged his shoulders. "So did he," he answered, quietly. "But he was a dead man from the very draw. Had he not been —" He hesitated a little.

"Then what?"

Motier pointed toward Wallannah. "He said that he would have killed her."

Maynard's eyes flashed. "Did he say that to you?"

"He did. It was his life or hers; and that —" But he paused again.

"And that?" repeated Maynard, eagerly.

Motier met his eyes. "That was all that kept me from going down to the pool," he answered. And, as Motier turned and left the man and his wife together, the moonlight shone full upon a dark blotch where the blood oozed from a jagged tear in his shirt-front.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Reckoning an Account

SQUIRE CANTWELL sat at the desk in his motto-embellished office in New Bern. His right hand held a letter which he had received from Captain Maynard a week before informing him of the death of Jacob Cantwell, and his left rested upon the manuscript of an address which he was expecting to deliver at a prayer-meeting on the following Sabbath day. Cantwell was looking toward Simon Fawn, who sat in an easy chair near the middle of the room.

"'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,'" he said, with resignation; "'blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

Fawn, having his own opinion of Jake Cantwell's character, looked reflectively at the floor. "Yes, 'blessed be the name of the Lord,'" he repeated, slowly.

Cantwell did not catch the deeper significance of the merchant's words.

Fawn looked up after a moment's pause. "What a good thing it is that you are such a faithful believer in the divine wisdom," he said, sympathetically. "A worldly man would have grieved more. Such faith as yours, friend John, is indeed sublime."

"No, no," said Cantwell, with humble deprecation, "my faith is but a little thing; but I thank God for such as it is. It carries me over many a stormy way."

Simon gave a little gasp, which he straightway opened into a sleepy yawn. "We must all die some day, neighbor," he said, rubbing his puffy hands together, and giving a pious leer across the desk, "and Jake — may God bless his spirit! — had to go some time. It must console you to know that he died bravely in your service, a martyr to filial duty. He will have his reward; but you, John, have lost your right hand. None other could serve you like Jake."

"He was a good boy, and a true son."

"Yes, a true son of a worthy father." Simon's light eyes had something like satire in them, but the 'Squire, looking down at his sermon, failed to catch the gleam.

Several seconds passed before either spoke. Then Fawn moved in his chair. "Did Maynard kill him?" he asked, crossing his legs and resting his chin on one hand.

Cantwell looked up slowly. "Maynard?" he repeated. "No; I think not: he writes me a letter of condolence, but says little of the circumstances of the boy's death."

"Perhaps Jake found the one for whom he looked."

"Young Du Val?"

"None other."

The 'Squire's head shook with a convinced negative. "No, I should say not. Had he met Du Val the funeral would have been from another quarter. No one could stand before Jake's sword."

"But setting Du Val aside, I have my doubts about Maynard. He's a hard customer."

"You are qualified to speak, I believe. He handled you very well in that powder conspiracy."

"Yes, I can speak as one having authority. And where I fail, you may well be careful yourself. A hard customer, John! Did he happen to write anything concerning his wife?"

Cantwell looked a trifle surprised. "His wife? Why, she's been dead for fifteen years! He wouldn't write of her."

Fawn smiled broadly. 'Oh, no! certainly not. But don't you suppose I know as well as you that Wallannah, the goddess or whatever she may be, is Mrs. Maynard? Had she been dead, you would have given yourself but little concern about the captain. You see, I know this secret; but its safe, like all the others — for a consideration, you know."

"I think I do know."

"No doubt. You see, I have no wish to thwart these virtuous little plans of yours; for my friendly interest makes we wish to see you rich — the richer the better. Then too, as we have said before, we must cherish the goose that lays the egg of gold. Folly would it be to break up the nest."

The 'Squire looked gravely at the guileless Simon. "I will be frank with you," he said, dropping his eyes, "for, as you say, your interest is much the same as mine. Now then, let's understand this matter. If Maynard ever gets his pardon — and he has friends who may prevail upon Tryon's successor — the nest will be broken of its own self. As it now stands, she

is dead — to the world, I mean — and without a child; but he may bring her to life again, for I learn that Boggs has been visiting her and entertains hope of her recovery. Under the authority of her brother's will — her brother was Richard Dudley, you recall — under that authority, I felt warranted in taking her property as my own. I have sold some of it, including the lot on which stood the Maynard house before the fire that caused the death of Maynard's little son Arthur. If Margaret Maynard were left to herself she would never come back to New Bern, and would pass away in the mystery of her singular character as the 'great Wallannah.' But at home again, and in her right mind, she might make it awkward for me. Where then would be the golden egg?"

"But the property will be yours at last: she has no child."

"After all these years she may claim one. What proof could I bring against her? The *onus probandi* would rest on me. No, no, friend; Maynard must not come back."

"Well, attend to that end of it yourself. I want you to increase in wealth; but, as it is now, you have enough to divide. You and I can live on it, can't we, friend John?"

Cantwell swore inaudibly, but with great earnestness. "You have lived on it long enough, I guess," he said, with some show of spirit. "Why don't you fasten your talons in some other lamb?"

Fawn's massive frame shook with laughter. "Lamb! Oh, my Lord! You're a lovely lamb, such a dear, soft spring lamb! How innocently you gambol

on the green! John, my tender little lamb, shake off your wool, and settle down to business. Business before pleasure; eh, lambie? How much money did you get for the property you sold Du Val?"

Cantwell's face was a little red, and his teeth showed with a wolfish smile. "If you're through with your insane bantering, I'll tell you. I got four hundred pounds for it."

"Say four hundred — though I know it's a — what's the genteel word? — a prevar-i-ca-tion. Good word, eh, John? Anyway, two hundred of it will do me for the present."

"Two hundred pounds! You're a highwayman: I can't spare that much."

"Spare isn't the word, John. Be more particular with the king's English. Do not say 'can't spare'; say 'got to pay': it's more to the point. Let me rehearse my account, then I'll put it onto paper. That's fair and square; and you won't have to pay a penny beyond it. Let me see. J. M.—No; the Honorable John M. Cantwell to S. Fawn, debtor. For services rendered in helping to keep one wife out of the way of the other, one hundred pounds."

"I paid that once."

"On last year's account, yes; but we're talking of the current year now. Don't squirm; the charge is moderate. Now, item second, services rendered in keeping secret the real parentage of your daughter, Alice Cantwell (known to the world as Alice De Vere), fifty pounds. What say you to that?"

"One and the same with the first item. If Alice finds me to be her father, she will necessarily know

of my marriage to her mother, Mary Ross. I can pay no separate sum for that."

"Well enough. That will make the first item one hundred and fifty instead of one hundred. It's all the same to me."

"Now, before you go on with the rest of your ravings, give me a hearing on another question. Alice is old enough to look out for herself now: suppose she stumbles onto this secret of identity. I'm afraid after all I made a blunder in casting off Mary."

"I told you I had given you a good wife, and that you were at fault for not having kept her. But what has Alice been doing?"

"Winning a wealthy man for a husband, that's what."

"You mean the Frenchman?"

"Frenchman the devil! No; Lord Durham."

"Lord Durham! Alice De Vere and he expect to marry?"

"Alice Cantwell, you mean."

"She is Alice De Vere to him and to every one else except you and me: how can you claim her openly? Ah, noble friend! You are one of these wondrous chess-players who blocks his own pawns, and sticks fast in the middle of the game. You must resign your claim as her sire. But this Durham matter surprises me: he's old enough for her father."

"In the eyes of the fair, Simon, a nobleman is never old so long as his money lasts."

"But are you sure of this thing?"

"Cer-tain-ly," was the emphatic response. "He visits her every day; and they ride together and walk

together hours at a time. Leaving her the other day, he was seen to put his arm about her and kiss her."

"But, dear lamb, these lords are tricky fellows. Your unsuspecting honesty may be deceived."

"Durham is an honorable man."

"Thank God there's one in New Bern! But I'll wager he's no friend of yours."

Cantwell did not answer.

"Now, to return to business," said Fawn, "let's take up the third item — the second as it stands corrected. Services rendered in guarding the street for you, fifty pounds. No; that's too cheap."

"Guarding the street? What in thunder is that?"

"Hush! Don't get violent, lamb. You're apoplectic anyway, you know. It was on the night that your unfortunate brother-in-law lost his life."

Cantwell was very pale. He stood up and looked Simon in the face. "What do you mean by that, Mr. Fawn?'

"Mr. Fawn? Oh, yes; you mean me? Well, Mister Cantwell, it means just this." He arose and stood facing the 'Squire. "It means that one lovely night in April last I chanced to pass by this fold — a 'fold' is proper for a lamb's house, is it not? — and I saw John Ross come from your door and walk up the street. I stepped behind a tree; and by the shimmering (good word, that!) by the shimmering moonlight saw you follow your brother-in-law, walking on your tip-toes. Thinking that you and he had met in your true relations, I concluded that you were following him to seek an interview in some secluded spot, where the

powers of your artful eloquence might silence him. And they did. That is what the second item means; for I kept back a friend of yours who had seen you and was anxious to follow. I'll raise that amount from fifty to a hundred pounds. But wait till I set my watch by this handsome new clock of yours."

Fawn, with provoking calmness, turned his back to the 'Squire and walked toward the tall Dutch clock that stood upon the floor. He set and wound his watch, and was turning to continue the conversation, when his eye caught Cantwell's reflection in the mirror beneath the clock-face. The 'Squire was fingering a dagger which he had taken from a desk drawer.

Fawn turned quickly and met Cantwell as that worthy crept around the end of his desk. The merchant reached carelessly to an inside pocket and pulled out a pistol. "Lay down your pretty dagger, Johnnie boy; you may cut your fingers." And Fawn chucked the 'Squire under the chin with the muzzle of the pistol. "There now, move the weapon just a little farther from you. That's right! Now sit down, good friend, and quiet your nerves. Lord! What a delicate hair-trigger this pistol has! I verily believe that a touch would send it off; and my fingers are subject to sudden spasms, too. Wouldn't it be horrible —"

"For God's sake, turn that thing the other way!" cried Cantwell. sinking into his chair. "It might go off."

"No such luck, little lamb. I pray you to excuse me for retaining this dagger. I'm fond of relics, you see. Take down the pistol? Why, certainly. I quite forgot it. Now, let's resume our business. No

apologies, dear John! You were thoughtless, I dare say; and intended no ugly use of this weapon."

"Believe me, Simon," said Cantwell, contritely, 'you should have known me better than to think such a thing. To tell the truth —"

Simon held his hand to his ear. "Didn't catch that: to do what?" he queried.

"To tell the truth —"

"Oh, yes! but the words came clumsily from your mouth. Well, to tell the truth?"

"I — I was thinking of Maynard, perhaps in an unchristian spirit."

"And had I been Maynard?"

"Don't ask, good friend: it pains me to think of it."

"Of course, you tender-hearted lamb! Then we won't think of it. Now, our account stands: one hundred and fifty plus one hundred, equals two hundred and fifty. That amount will square us for a while. Give me your paper for it."

Cantwell did as he was bidden, and Fawn slipped the bill of exchange into his pocket.

Then Cantwell, smoothing the wrinkles from his forehead, swore very softly. "You hold me safe for a while longer?" he asked, after a silence.

"Perfectly, John — at least for quite a time. In the meanwhile, if I can suggest anything to your advantage, command me. One other point, and I'm done. I have written sworn statements of all our dealings, every one of them; and these documents are in safe keeping to be opened immediately after my death. I only mention this to secure me against

mistakes in identity. You might make a slip some time while thinking of Captain Maynard. There, take your pretty paper-cutter; and excuse my precautions in this affair. You deliver that address upon 'Christian Humility' on Sunday morning, do you?"

"Yes, God willing."

"I promise you to be there. Your pious words will thrill my bosom with awe. Good bye, gentle hypocrite: sleep the sleep of the just." And he went out of the room, leaving Cantwell in a frame of mind not far removed from lunacy.

CHAPTER XXIX

Cupid Seems in Trouble

MOTIER DU VAL sat in his room in the tavern in New Bern. Returning from the mountains he had found the palace deserted; for Tryon, returning from his march of triumph, had been somewhat hurriedly transferred from the province of North Carolina to the seat of government of New York. There 'his Excellency' found, in due course, ample opportunity for the practice of his refined cruelties. Lady Tryon and Esther Wake, with the entire personal following of the governor, had gone with him; and the doors of the palace were closed, James Hassel, of the council, preferring to reside in his own home while handling temporarily the reins of government. Lord Durham had taken up his abode in the village, and the senior Du Val had secured rooms at the inn. Thus it was that at four o'clock of the afternoon of August 12, 1771, Motier, having changed his weather-stained traveling suit for his garb of black, sat by his window and smoked the stone pipe which had once been Ocebee's brother's.

Du Val had reached New Bern an hour before, and had found to his disappointment that his father had left for France on the previous day, answering a summons to claim his share of a large estate. He had

left a letter for his son, and its expressions were so kindly, and the powers which it conferred in the management of his father's interests in the province were so broad, that Motier was greatly pleased. He had sent Tonta, who was again with him, to Doctor Boggs with a note from Maynard; but reserved another note, to Miss De Vere, for personal delivery.

Motier's mind still clung to the incidents of the weeks just past. He remembered above all else the day that Herman Husbands had left the cavern of Yaunocca; and he seemed even now to see the bulky form of the leader of the Regulation disappearing into the neck of the rocky gorge. The little band of patriots had watched until Husbands had passed from their view; and Captain Maynard and Motier, with tight-pressed lips and with moisture in their eyes, had stood there with them. It was a pitiful little farewell, without salute or the dipping of flags or the sound of music, and the pathos of that hour recurred to Motier throughout all the remaining days of his life. Herman Husbands had been all in all to these rugged men, who had worked and hoped and prayed and fought for a liberty that still stayed a long way off; and Herman Husbands, kindly, genial, great-hearted, and noble of spirit, went from their lives with a wrench that brought tears to the eyes of men whose hearts had never before softened. What wonder then, that Howell, trying to say a cheering word as they turned back to the cave, felt his voice choke in his throat, and sat for a long time with his face buried in his hands. Motier remembered the expression of Howell's white, drawn features as he looked up and said, "He was our last

hope, my brothers. There's nothing left for us but to go back and say, The friend we loved has gone, and our spirit has gone with him. Come on, boys!" And with bowed heads they went into the Grand Hall to prepare for their journey. Seeing and hearing these things, Motier knew that the words were those of a full heart, and that hope indeed was dead in those who had staked their all on a vain fight for freedom.

After recalling the days at Yaunocca, Motier, refilling his pipe, began thinking of Alice De Vere. Did he love her? or did he not? And if not, why did she come so persistently into his daily thoughts? Why had he ridden his horse to exhaustion to reach New Bern as soon as he could? and why had he told Tonta to let him know when Fleetfoot was ready to carry him to Beechwood? Why? And at every question came the memory of a light-haired girl whose eyes had naught but purity in their depths.

After an hour Tonta announced that Fleetfoot awaited him; and Motier, thundering down the stairway, bounded into the yard and mounting horse, whispered into Fleetfoot's ear, "To her, boy; to her!" And the dust flew from the road that led to Beechwood.

Great though his haste, Motier could not pass the door of Boggs' office without seeing the worthy doctor. So he swung from his saddle and entered the doorway.

Quack met him. "Glad to see ye back from de wahs, sah!" he said, with an expansive smile. "Dey sayed de Injuns done got you, but I knowed you was too much fer 'em."

"Glad to see you, Quack," answered Motier.

"You're really looking handsome. And your ruffles have come out again!"

The negro looked proudly at his shirt front. "Dat Squeecy o' your'n sent de ol' uns back yestiddy — to git 'em washed, I 'spec. Dese is new uns, bran new: Mars Doctor got 'em made 'spressly fer me, sah. But, walk in, sah! Marster's a-lookin' fer you."

Boggs came forward, his spectacles shoved up to the top of his forehead, and his face glowing with a genial smile. "Du Val, God bless you!" he cried, "I'm glad to get you back again. Come, sit right down and tell me all about your fun. Here, Quack, wrap up those pills. Du Val, my hearty! these good people had you drawn and quartered and burned at the stake, until Neale and his party came back and said that you had gone to Wallannah the day before the Cherokees turned him loose. What happened after he left? Did you go to the mountains? Did you see Wallannah? Tell me all about it."

Motier, consumed with impatience and eager to get to the De Vere mansion, felt that Boggs, good friend though he was, would never stop talking. But, knowing that the doctor's interest was not that of idle curiosity, he told him all that he knew.

"You have given me new hope," said the doctor when Motier had told him his opinion of Mrs. Maynard's mental condition. "She is better than when I saw her last. The letter you sent me from the captain says much the same. But, my dear boy, your experiences have been so remarkable that I must put them into a book. I have a fancy for writing, you know."

"Let it be the book of your remembrance, then. That will satisfy my ambition."

"Not a whit of it! Not a whit!" protested the loquacious doctor. "Your ambitions demand, or will demand, something better. You shall be known! Whether you realize it or not, you are ambitious. But your ambition is of the higher sort, that which scorns unmerited distinction. There is another sort, of which you know nothing, the ambition that only seeks notoriety, notoriety of any kind. Tony Muckles is a good specimen of that class. Have I ever told you of Tony? You see, Tony —"

Du Val interrupted him. "My dear doctor," he said, with a laugh. "Don't tell me about Tony now. It's a good story, and I'll ask you for it to-morrow; but I have an appointment which presses me."

"Bless my soul! Have I interfered with an engagement? I beg your pardon! I forgot you had other friends in town."

"This errand is not in town, doctor. I am going to Beechwood."

The doctor pulled down his spectacles and looked sharply at his friend. "You are going to the De Vere's?" he asked, with some incredulity.

"Yes," responded Motier; then, with a smile, "Why not?"

"Well, you have more magnanimity than I thought." He paused a moment, and noting the puzzled expression of Du Val's face, added, "You have heard, of course?"

"Heard what?"

"The news of Alice?"

"I know no news of Alice. What do you mean?"

"It should have been told you," answered Boggs, with a slight embarrassment. "Du Val, my boy, I had suspected that you had a leaning in her direction; and if you have, cut loose from it. She's on the verge of marriage."

Motier tapped his boot with his riding whip. "And to whom?" he asked, with apparent carelessness.

"To Lord Durham."

"Durham? Why, my dear doctor, you must be astray in your observations. His Lordship is too old for Miss De Vere; and she is not the kind to sell herself for gold and a title."

"I thought so — once," answered Boggs, sadly shaking his head, "and I would gladly think so again. She was long my ideal of maidenly perfection. I myself denied the rumor when it first came the rounds; but the repetitions were too many for my faith. You may as well go, however; and I trust you'll find her the same pure-hearted girl you have always thought her. If so we will both be pleased; for I am overfond of the child."

Du Val turned and looked thoughtfully out to the street. Fleetfoot was pawing nervously, and champing upon his bit. "I will go," said Motier, at last. "If it ends badly for me, let it end." Then he turned to the doctor. "Until to-morrow, my friend, adieu!" And before Boggs could reach the door Fleetfoot was a quarter-mile up the road.

Motier began thinking that things were in a pretty stew. First was the firm-seated conviction that he felt something more than friendliness for Alice. If Doctor

Boggs had heard the truth Motier's disappointment would be a keen one. Du Val's moral code gave a low mark to any woman whose ambition or avarice led her to a loveless marriage. In his opinion the girl who gave herself for a title and a fortune, without love, was several degrees below the strange woman whose house meant loss of hope to whomsoever went within. And Alice in such a role? The thought shocked him beyond expression. But he determined to prove that his confidence had not been misplaced. "'Tis a lie!" he muttered to himself; and every time that a break in the woods revealed the grey roofs of Beechwood his lips framed that same sentence, "'Tis a lie!"

At the door Motier was met by Mr. De Vere. "Ah! my dear Motier," exclaimed the old gentleman, grasping his hand, "can it indeed be you? and in flesh and blood? We have mourned you as lost; Captain Neale's reports were so dubious. But you look well. Come in: the ladies are in the parlor. We've been talking of you. Come! We'll greet you *en famille.*"

"You overwhelm me, monsieur. But I'm truly glad to see you, and to note that you look so much improved."

"A deceptive flush, my boy. I am no better. But of that later. Come in!"

Madame De Vere and Alice and Mary Ross arose as Motier entered; and for the moment the room was filled with a babble of greetings.

"Had you been a spirit," said Madame De Vere, "we should hardly have been more surprised. But I felt sure that if your Indian captors ever took you to

Wallannah, you would be safe. How well you do look!"

"Indeed," said Mary Ross, "you seem as one who has been on a pleasure trip."

"Quite the reverse," laughed Motier. "If any one had the pleasure it must have been a Cherokee. They gave me little time for enjoyment."

Alice was the only one who acted under restraint. Her words of welcome were halting and confused. But her hand lingered a moment in his as they spoke a few words to one another; and he saw a little flush creep to her cheeks. At first he thought he understood it, and his heart beat more quickly; but he changed his mind in the same moment, and concluded that he had no idea of what it meant. He had learned that the less guessing he did about a woman's secret thoughts, the fewer were his blunders.

"I have a letter from Captain Maynard to you, Miss De Vere," he said, after an awkward pause. "He exacted the promise that I deliver it into your own hands." He presented the note with a bow, and she saw that his smile was studiously cold.

Alice murmured her thanks.

"Read it, my dear," said her mother, "while Monsieur Du Val tells us of his adventures."

Motier followed Madame De Vere to the sofa with some reluctance. A walk in the garden were more to his liking, and Alice would have been his choice of companion. But he was browbeaten after the gentle, womanly fashion, and related his story, carefully expunging his several deeds of blood. He made "some fellow" the slayer of Ocebee, and "some other fellow"

the victor over Cantwell; for he wished to see the effect of these sanguinary stories before he jeopardized his position by talking too much of his own achievements.

During this recital, Alice, while seeming to read, betrayed by a hundred little glances that her chief interest was in Motier's narrative; and indeed the letter lay, after a few moments, on a chair beside her, unheeded. Motier noticed this; and a ray of comfort came to him. But he had to confess that Alice had not acted as does a woman who keeps a bruised rosebud in her album.

"How the time has passed," exclaimed De Vere, when Motier had concluded. "You have actually made me forget my medicine, and my headache as well. Your stories have made my blood tingle. I can hardly realize that you have been through all these things; but, you see, I'm not a man of action, and adventures are all strange to me."

Motier arose. "I am sorry to leave such friends," he said, "but I must go. I'm afraid indeed that you will make an egotist of me if I remain longer."

"But not so soon," protested Madame De Vere. "We supposed you would stay to supper, at least."

"And through the night also," put in De Vere. "Your old room has been lonely since you left. Really, Motier, you are leaving us too early."

"You overpower me with kindness," answered Motier. "But my return must be in response to duty. I am under promise."

"But, assuredly, not before supper," interposed Mary Ross, pleadingly. "It will be served in a moment."

Motier smiled. "Assuredly, before supper," he responded, "but not without great regret." He moved toward the door.

Of them all, Alice alone had said nothing.

"But you will come again, very soon?" questioned Madame De Vere.

"To-morrow, if you will let me."

"To-morrow it shall be, then. Come at eleven, and the fat of the land shall be yours."

Motier, leaving them on the veranda, rode slowly back to New Bern. He was puzzled and disappointed by Alice's demeanor. Had all that Boggs told him been true, the girl would have acted as she did: had the rumor been false, why then should she have kept such distance and met him so coldly? Their parting that April morning might have given rise to some feeling of lasting resentment in her; but, if so, why had she kept the rose? Then came another question: had she thrown it away since Esther had seen it? Somehow, he thought that she had.

Motier keeping his promise, returned to Beechwood on the morrow. Lord Durham was there before him. It was plainly to be seen that his Lordship was in favor with Alice; and the girl, for her part, made no effort to conceal her affection. Yet Du Val could entertain no envy of Durham, for he was irresistibly drawn toward the nobleman. Notwithstanding, Motier did not feel at ease. But neither by word nor by action did he show that his composure was a well-worn mask. He exerted himself to please, and succeeded with a success that overtopped that of every previous effort. Still, he was glad enough to get away.

Cupid Seems in Trouble

Several days later Motier, determined to have an interview with Alice, came again to the country mansion. Mr. De Vere had caught a severe cold and was ill in his room, attended by Madame and by Mary Ross. Thus did good fortune leave Alice to discharge the duties of hostess; and therefore did Motier go far from the truth when he said that he was sorry not to see the absent members of the household.

CHAPTER XXX

The Fortune-Teller Plays a Hand

IN the darkened parlor Du Val and Alice talked for a few moments, aimlessly, and with little satisfaction to either, and Alice, realizing the unpleasantness of the situation, proposed a walk in the garden, which suggestion Motier accepted with unbecoming haste. Together they walked down the broad hallway, he towering far above her, and she smiling as she tried to time her steps to his great strides. At the stone stairway to the graveled walk, Motier, with some return of the old spirit, extended his hand to her as she stood for a brief moment at the edge of the uppermost step.

"Permit me to hand you down, my Lady," he said, watching for her notice of the title which he gave her, and which, forsooth, he was convinced Durham would soon make good. Alice, frankly meeting his quizzical glance, gave him her hand.

"You are kind, my Lord," she answered, with no show of embarrassment. So, raising her hand shoulder-high, and keeping always on the step below her, he led her to the garden. She looked down the path with a swift glance.

"This was once your favorite promenade," she said, lifting her skirt a little from the dust. "Have you forgotten?"

"Forgotten?" he echoed, vainly seeking a glimpse of her averted face. "A man cannot forget, even when he tries."

They walked toward the rustic bench. Alice stopped at the bush from which she had picked the white rose and reached out her hand; then, after a moment's hesitation, drew it back again.

Motier watched her, knowing that the time was near when something would be said.

She turned toward him, and he saw the color rush to her temples. "M'sieur Du Val," she said, "I have done you a great wrong."

"Boggs was right," thought Motier, gloomily. "I can easily admit her wrong." But he did not answer her.

"I want to explain it to you," she continued, looking down as she nervously fingered the chain which held her fan. "The last time you were here I was misled by your acceptance of an office on Governor Tryon's staff, knowing as I did that the governor was Captain Maynard's bitterest enemy. Remembering that our friend had really saved your life by bringing you here after your runaway accident, I thought it strange that you should repay him by going to war against him. But I have read Captain Maynard's letter. He writes of your gallantry, and of your faithful discharge of the debt of gratitude which you owed him. With all of this before me I want to ask —" But, woman-like, she would beg no forgiveness: instead, she amended her question. "You don't think badly of me, do you?" she asked, with bewitching frankness.

"Think badly of you!" Motier smiled into the

eyes which were upturned to his. "I'm really afraid that I think too well of you — too often, anyway." He knew enough of woman-nature to foresee that his assertion would pass without response; but he made the move, trusting to luck for its effect.

The cast was a bad one, for she evaded, of course. "I condemned you without a hearing," she admitted, "and that, you know, isn't good law."

"I trust that your verdict has been reversed," he said. "I am reasonably independent, but I cannot afford to forfeit your good opinion."

"My good opinion, M'sieur, was only shaken for the moment; it was never overthrown."

"I am happy to know it," he said. "But let me ask you: have you forgiven my hasty return of the rose which you gave me that morning?"

She smiled just a little. "Positively, I can never forgive that; for it did not please me. But perhaps you were right; and, giving you the benefit of the doubt, I will grant a conditional pardon."

"And the condition?"

"No second offense."

"No chance," he thought to himself; but he said aloud: "Then we are friends?"

She held out her hand, and he raised it to his lips. Then they looked at one another, and she, laughingly, said: "You should be an actor." Then, reaching out and picking the rose which she had left untouched a few moments before, "you say and do things just like a player."

"Like a good actor, or a bad one?"

"Like an excellent one."

"I am gratified to have you think that. An excellent actor, as you know, always lives the part he plays. I play the part I live, which is the same —"

"But decidedly different," she interrupted, turning toward the rustic bench. "Let us seek the shadier spot."

Seating themselves under a great magnolia tree, they were silent for a very brief time.

Then Motier broached the subject which was foremost in his mind. "How forgetful I am!" he exclaimed, with admirable suddenness. "I have neglected to congratulate you."

She raised her eyebrows and looked at him curiously. "Congratulate me? Upon what, pray tell me?"

"Upon finding one more worthy than I to wear your colors."

She gave a short, mystified laugh. "Riddles and enigmas, M'sieur!" was her retort. "I am a poor analyst: what do you mean?"

"Really now, can you not guess?"

"Not if I tried forever."

He studied her closely; but she was beautiful, and a woman, so his scrutiny availed him nothing. "But you are to be married?" he ventured.

She laughed. "Am I? Then do congratulate me, Sir Knight; but afterward name me my victim."

"My congratulations are on record; and the fortunate one—Lord Durham, of course."

"Yes, certainly; of course. But how do you know?"

"I have heard it all," he answered, hopelessly.

"Well, M'sieur Du Val, be good to me now, and tell me all. I myself have not heard a word of it."

"You are not to marry Lord Durham?"

"Positively, no."

"H'm!"

Alice laughed at his discomfiture. "You are brief," she said.

"I am paralyzed."

He scanned her radiant face and tried again to puzzle out her thoughts. Wisely, however, he abandoned the task. "Whence comes the smoke if there be no fire?" he asked, with unpardonable unbelief.

"The scandal is not without ground," she replied, glancing down and brushing a tiny spider from the rose in her hand, "for I love Lord Durham dearly; and some day I can tell you all there is to tell. Truly, though, it is not what you think it to be."

"I am very glad."

"Yes?"

Motier seized upon the encouragement of the half-questioning word. "I am glad," he hastened to say, "because I am now able to tell you what before I could not. Going back centuries into the past, let me talk about the white rose! Do you know that I have regretted a thousand times that I ever sent it back to you?"

"'Centuries,' and 'a thousand times'! M'sieur, how atrociously you exaggerate! But you honestly wanted the flower?"

"Yes; really."

"I have kept it for you; but it is sadly withered."

"You remember what you told me?"

"That you could have another?"

"The very words."

"Well, here it is. Have you a pin?"

"The same one." He flushed a little. "I have kept it ever since."

"Foolish boy!" she rejoined, reaching out to his coat lapel. "That was very dangerous: old pins give people lockjaw, they say."

"Handle it carefully, then; it's millions of years old."

"Have no fear," she answered, pinning the rose into place, "women never have lockjaw."

Motier, yielding to a great temptation, pressed his lips upon the fingers which rested on his coat. Alice drew her hand quickly away. She reddened, and sat looking straight before her with a little line between her brows.

After a very long silence Motier bent slightly forward. "Did I understand you to say," he questioned, with assumed seriousness, "that women are never afflicted with lockjaw?"

She turned her eyes until they met his. But she did not answer him. After a moment she averted her face.

Motier, resting his hand upon the back of the settee, moved closer to her. "Alice," he said, gently, "perhaps I was wrong, and perhaps I can only make matters worse by speaking; but, candidly, I had no wish to resist the temptation which came in my way when you pinned that flower to my coat. Measured by a man's standard, the act was a little one; but, truly, it carried my whole heart with it. I kissed the hand

because I loved the woman to whom it belonged." He stopped and waited; but she did not answer. Then he slipped one hand toward hers. His heart gave a quick leap as her fingers closed about his. But still her eyes were fixed on a far-off boxwood hedge.

"Alice," he said, taking up the thread of his declaration, "I have told you what I should have kept secret for a longer time. You know me but little, while I have known and loved you all my life, first in the ideal and afterward in its incarnation.

"You were with me in every hour of the weeks I spent in the army and in the wilderness," he continued, desperately. "Nothing but my thoughts of you gave me comfort in the days of my imprisonment; and when the Cherokees had me in their council lodge, I wondered if you would care if their verdict went against me."

The clasp of her hand tightened perceptibly.

"Then," he went on, "when death twice looked me in the face, I thought, 'would she care, if she knew?' But I had to come back to Beechwood for the answer."

She did not turn, but he noticed a slight trembling of her lips. "Don't talk like that, Motier," she entreated, in a voice such as he had once heard in a dream. "You do not know how it hurts me."

"Would you really have cared?" he asked, quickly.

She turned her gaze full upon his eager, questioning face. "Would I have cared?" she repeated, softly. "Must I tell you that I would have cared?"

"No; but tell me you are glad that I have told you this."

"I think —" she faltered, lowering her eyes, "I think that I am very glad."

He slipped his arm to her waist. She looked up, a vivid flush overspreading her cheeks. and he kissed her quickly upon the lips.

"That was wrong, Motier," she admonished, playing with the seal-ring on his finger. "I'm afraid you're terribly — terribly —"

"Bashful?" he suggested.

"No; not at all bashful."

"Dull of comprehension?"

"Lamentably."

"What have I failed to comprehend?"

"You have comprehended, Motier; but —"

"But I took so long, do you mean?"

"You were a little slow in seeing."

"And you?"

"That secret is mine. But, truly, Motier, do you love me as you say?"

"Do I, dearest? Yes; devotedly and reverently. And are you fully convinced that I meet the requirements?"

She shook her head. "Less than half of them." She arose, brushing some rose leaves from her skirt: "I will say, however, that fifty per cent. is very, very high."

"I shall try for a hundred," he said, as he rose and walked up the path with her.

"Useless, Motier. You would fail; and then, you see, I'm — I'm satisfied."

Motier took her face between his hands and kissed her until her laughing protests were smothered.

Then she broke away from him. "You have lowered your standing to ten per cent.," she cried, from a safe distance.

"If it works that way," retorted Motier, overtaking her and securing her arm with his, "I shall try to cut it to zero."

Thus it was that Motier hummed gayly-timed ballads as, an hour or so later, he let Fleetfoot find the way back to New Bern.

There was great happiness in the days that followed. Motier was a frequent visitor at Beechwood; for feeling now that he was preferred far above Lord Durham, he determined that his Lordship should stay in the background as long as he could keep him there. Of Alice's truth and purity of purpose he had no doubt. Boggs's ill-born chimera had been laughingly stowed away in his hall of visionary relics.

The garden soon oppressed this couple with its smallness; and they found a leafy bower, built by the sprites of the wood, where the slow-going waters of the Neuse ebbed and rose again to kiss the grass and flowers at their feet. Thither Du Val had brought one day — to Alice's great amusement — a woodsman's axe; and, with strong blows that made the white chips fall showering, had felled a thick cypress tree across the tiny glade. This was their pew in God's own temple, where they sat and listened to the sermons of the river and of the wood and of the birds that swept over the one and lingered hiding in the other. They listened, moreover, to other sounds; for each said much, and the words they spoke were in low tones, and went side by side with the glance of the eye and

the touch of the hand that make mere words seem empty and meaningless.

One morning, after a week of cloudless happiness, Motier and Alice, hearing a slight sound behind them, turned and saw a stout, red-faced woman enter their bush-girt bower. She wore a huge sun-bonnet, was dressed in blue calico, and swayed as she walked.

"Gentle folk," she said, with an awkward curtsey, "can I tell yer fortunes?"

Alice answered her. "My good woman," she said, with a smile, "there is no need: we are quite well satisfied with our present ignorance. But, notwithstanding, you shall have your penny." And she held out a small coin.

The woman gave a resolute shake of the head. "I don't want no money, purty one," she said, drawing nearer to Alice. "But I'd like to tell yer fortunes jes' the same: thar ain't no harm in it; not a bit. I like yer sweet face, missis; an' p'r'aps I mought do you some good. Lemme see yer han': 'twon't do you no hurt."

Alice held out her shapely hand and the woman took it in her broad, hard palm. "To gratify your wish," she said, laughingly, "here is my hand; but, remember, good woman, the fortune must be a bright one."

"Mebbe not; but I'll tell it jes' the same. Well, well, I never! See the little lines a-running' down thar, an' all a-crossin'? That's whar yer life has its beginnin'. An' thar's heaps o' trebble thar. An' here — poor gal! An' here yer line o' life gits tangled up 'ith another what ain't your'n; an' it gits kinder

lost. An' bless me! How it shifts about! Fer here you've come clean out in the wrong place. Why you ain't yerself, missis; yer somebody else!"

Motier laughed and began chopping at the tree with his knife; but Alice paled a little and shook her hand impatiently.

"Go on!" the girl said, in a low voice.

"I'm a goin' to," replied the woman, slowly tracing the palm-lines with her rough finger. "Smooth enough down to here; but now comes trebble ag'in. Purty one, thar's danger ahead o' you. I give you plain warnin'. You love somebody as loves you; an' he's all right hisself."

Motier looked sharply at the woman. But, meeting his gaze, she did not waver.

"But this man ain't fer you," she went on, "nor you ain't fer him. You mustn't marry him, missis. You'd better go jump in the river then to do it. I'm mons'ous sorry; but it's so. He's a dark-haired man." She turned toward Motier. "Jes' sich a lookin' one as you, young master; an' it may be you, sence you two's a-settin' here so companion-like together. Can't you let me see yer han', sir?"

"Not to-day," answered Motier, coldly. "And on general principles I must advise you to stop looking at hers. You can do no good with your guess-work."

Alice was looking fixedly toward the river, and her eyes wore a look of trouble.

The fortune-teller turned back to the girl. "I'm sorry ef I've hurt yer feelin's, missis," she said, with some tenderness, "but it couldn't be helped. Think a

bit on what I said. "You'd better heed the warnin'. Good bye t' ye both."

"Why do you let this worry you, Alice?" asked Motier, when the woman had gone. "You surely give no weight to her words?"

"Perhaps not, Motier; but I'm sorry she came here."

"Dismiss the thought," said Motier, "and remain, with me, in the highlands of hope!"

CHAPTER XXXI

Unpleasant Revelations — With a Few Reflections on Paternity

RIDING homeward nearly two hours later, Motier, meeting at a turning in the road the woman who had told Alice's 'fortune,' reined in his horse.

"My good woman," he said, bending over Fleetfoot's neck and looking beneath the sun-bonnet, "who paid you to come to us with your fortune-telling? You had some purpose; for women of your vocation do not practice their art for nothing."

The woman raised her face and smiled broadly. "An' you don't know me, young master?" she asked. "I'm ol' Peggy McFaddin, the woman you fou't for on the p'rade groun' that day. I never forgot yer goodness; an' I ain't never goin' to. I've waited a long time fer a chance to do you good. When I heerd you was in a dang'rous place, I come to see you, soon as I could."

"And you think, Peggy, that you have done me good by giving trouble to this young friend of mine."

The smile faded from her lips, and tears came into her eyes. "I tried moughty hard to do you good, sir," she said. "But, young master, it's God's truth, you mustn't marry that 'ere gal. She's a sweet un; an' I

reckon you love 'er; as Bob sez, 'twould be ag'in' natur' ef you didn't. But still, you can't marry 'er. 'Twould make the both o' you mis'rable when you come to know the hull thing."

Motier crossed one knee over the saddle-bow and sitting side-wise of the horse regarded the old woman with a sternness that would have abashed a less honest person. "Suppose you explain this remarkable thing to me," he suggested, coolly. "Your story interests me through its very absurdity."

"I kinder hoped what I said this mornin' was goin' to stop the match; but young folk is hard to convence nowadays. You mean you don't believe me?"

"You have told me nothing to be believed — at least nothing that I can understand. If you are the friend you claim to be, tell me why I must not marry Miss De Vere?"

"It's a secret I said I wouldn't tell. But you helped me in my trebble, an' I'm a-goin' to help you in your'n. To tell you the fust thing: I nussed you when you was a babby."

"You? Have you ever lived in France?" Motier's question had in it more of sarcasm than of inquiry.

"No, master; I ain't no outlandisher: I'm Car'lina. But I nussed you jes' the same."

Du Val swung back into the saddle. "You carry your story too far, my good woman," he said, with a dry laugh. "I was born in France; and if you nursed me, it must have been there. Step aside, please, and give me the road."

"Jes' wait a bit! Don't go on so brash. You must hear me."

"Well?"

"When you fout fer me that day, so bold an' gentleman-like, I seed a mark like three cherries on yer arm 'bove yer wris'. I knowed you from that; and when I seen them eyes o' your'n, thar warn't no mistake. On the other arm, jes' 'bove the elbow, you've got a anchor 'longside the letter M. Bob worked it in ink afore he took you off to sea. Ain't it thar?"

Motier had whitened a little, and he restrained impatient Fleetfoot with an iron hand. "Yes; it is there," he said, in a hard, tense voice. "Go ahead with your story."

She reached down to her pocket. "Mayhap you have seen the match o' this," she said, bringing out a child's bracelet with ruby settings.

"Yes," he answered, with a strange look in his eyes. "I had the mate of it at home — in France. Now, in God's good name, tell me what you know of me."

"Sence you b'lieve me now," she said, dropping the bracelet back into her pocket, "I can be the frien' you need. The Lord knows you need one bad. But I can't tell you nothin' now. Come to my house to-morrer, 'bout ten o'clock — Bob'll be gone then — an' I'll tell you all I knows. Cross over the Trent River, an' ride down 'bout two mile. Then ask fer McFaddin's house: anybody'll tell you whar it is. Will you come, sure?"

"If I live, I will. But tell me one thing before you go. Why must I keep from marrying Miss De Vere?"

"Because the gal's yer own sister!"

The blow was a stunning one. Riding on to New Bern, with Peggy McFaddin far behind him in the road, Du Val felt that the cup of bitterness had been

handed him filled to overflowing. Were these things true, France was not his home, M. Du Val was not his father, and Alice could never be his wife. For France he cared but little, seeing that he had been driven from her shores; but the man he had called father from his toddling childhood? and the woman he loved as a man loves but once in a life?—these two were all the world to him.

Then, the complications concentrated into one; for each seemed to hinge upon the other. If M. Du Val was not his father, who was? Mr. De Vere? He was Alice's father, and if he and she were brother and sister, must it not be so? Yet how could these two people have lost him, or having lost him, why had they spoken of Alice as the only child that had blessed their marriage? These were perplexing questions: who am I? and who is my father? and who is my mother? and how is Alice my sister? and what does the whole thing mean? Conspirators, Indians and love affairs combined had never produced such cause for sleeplessness.

When Motier and Tonta met before breakfast the next morning, the Indian looked at his master with wide-open eyes. "Caiheek sick?" he asked, wonderingly.

"Yes, Tonta; sick as a stag with an arrow through the shoulder. Find me my pipe and some tobacco."

But Tonta still looked at Motier's face. "Brown Eyes come 'g'in?" he questioned, acutely.

"Brown eyes? What the devil do you know about brown eyes!"

Tonta recoiled a little from his master's scowl.

"Know plenty," he said, sturdily. "Know Caiheek Lieuten't in Charl'ton."

"Well, confound it! So did I. Get me my pipe and tobacco: I don't feel like talking."

Tonta had never seen Motier in such a frame of mind; and it troubled the boy. He brought the filled pipe to Du Val, who had seated himself by the window.

"Bad Spirit make Caiheek sick," he ventured, with much trepidation. "Good Spirit cure Caiheek: call Good Spirit."

"What do you mean by that?" Motier was looking at the boy from beneath close-drawn eyebrows.

"Mean what say. Caiheek call Good Spirit. Good Spirit save Caiheek at Yaunocca — make him cure now."

Motier lit his pipe, and looked reflectively at the smoke which wound in a blue spiral from the stone bowl. His face cleared a little as he thought. "Well, Tonta, you beat me," he said, at the end of a lengthy pause. "You can preach better than you can practice."

"Caiheek call Good Spirit?" he persisted, still looking into Motier's haggard face.

"I will see, Tonta," answered the master. Go down now, and see that Fleetfoot is fed."

After the Indian had left, Motier sat for a long time smoking and looking down at the floor. When the pipe had gone out, he leaned forward with his elbows on his knees and with his hands hanging listlessly below. The pipe which he held in the grasp of his fingers rested with its bowl upon the floor. After a time he began muttering something in a low tone, mechanically tapping the while with the carved calumet

upon the bare floor. When he straightened up, his jaws were firmly set, and his expression calm.

"Any one who takes that Indian for a fool misses by a full mile," he said; and something like a ray of cheerfulness crossed his clear-cut features.

Motier found the McFaddin house with but little difficulty. Peggy, arrayed in her best, awaited him; and 'Bob' was not there. When they had seated themselves the old woman opened the conversation.

"I tell you, young master," she said, with a twinkle in her eyes, "when Bob took you out o' this here door years an' years agone, my ol' eyes never did hope fer the sight o' you ag'in. Bob hed to take you to furrin lan's to save yer little life; fer them as ought to took keer o' you, went ag'n' natur' and was yer wust enemies. But Bob an' me carcumvented 'em — that is him; fer thar warn't but one we was afeerd of. But, Massy on us! How things is turned about! Here you be ag'in, a fine growed-up man as is able to stand fer yer own rights! You'll git yer rights, too. Mark my words: the finger o' God is in this 'ere thing: he's a-helpin' you now, or you couldn't 'a' stood it so well."

"I agree with you, Peggy," answered Motier. "Now, tell me what you can of my history. I'm rather eager to know the truth."

"I knows you must be that, young master. An' I'll be as short as I can, fearin' somebody mought come in."

Peggy's story was, in effect, that Motier had been stolen from his mother many years before by an Indian woman who lived about the white settlements. McFaddin chancing to meet the squaw, had so alarmed her that she dropped the infant in the road and made

her escape. There Bob picked up the child and brought it home to Peggy. On the baby's arm was a mark, a red blotch, like in form to three clustered cherries with tiny scarlet lines for the stems. She was very circumstantial in her account of the visit of a certain well-known man to their house a few days after Bob had found the child, and she narrated with great fidelity the incidents of the offering of the medicine, and the poisoning and the burial of Bowzer, the dog. But Peggy refused flatly to divulge the name of this visitor. "That mought git Bob into trebble," she insisted, "an' I couldn't tell it 'less Bob said so. P'r'aps ef you ask him, he'll tell you."

"But suppose he won't tell," remarked Motier. "Then what?"

"I reckon he will tell. I'll make him do it. You've got a right to know, seein' the man's yer own father. It wouldn't be nat'ral fer to keep it from you."

Motier looked thoughtfully out of the window; but his features gave little sign of the tumult that raged within. "You think that this ma — this fellow was my father?" he asked, in a constrained voice.

"So Bob found out," answered Peggy, her eyes flooding with tears. "But, young master, don't fret yerself no more 'n you can help. It warn't no fault o' your'n; an' p'r'aps after all the man warn't so bad. He may have made a mistake 'bout the p'ison. Folks sez he's a good man; an' I hope fer yer own sake he is."

"Well, tell me the rest of it," he said, wearily. "It's not a pleasant story; but I guess it means something to me."

"Well, long after Bob took you to the furrin lan's," she continued, "we found out yer mother was the good missis, Mary Ross."

Motier started. "Mary Ross?" he said, stupefied. "You don't mean the De Vere's friend?"

"She's jes' the one, sir. Her husban' run off an' lef' her with two childer — you an' Miss Alice. Then he married some other woman. Miss Mary reckoned fer a long time as her husband war dead; but she was a-hopin' an' a-hopin' all the time to find the Injun gal what stole her babby boy. Miss Mary was that proud she wouldn't have nothin' to do with her husban' when she foun' him; an' she ain't been to see 'im sence, neither. So, after a long time, when Miss Mary made up her min' the boy was dead (we couldn't tell her nothin' you see, 'cause we never knowed whar the boy was after Bob lef' him in the furrin country) after she reckoned the boy was dead, an' havin' nothin' to keep her from starvin', she let the little gal be 'dopted by Madam De Vere an' her husban', who didn't have no chick ner child o' their own. All that she asked was to be 'lowed to live with the gal as her gov'ness."

Motier listened to this recital with a composure that brought wonder to Peggy's simple heart. But his feelings were playing havoc with his nerves.

"You make out a bad case for this 'good man,' as you called the scoundrel you think is my father, but, thank God! I'm not ashamed of the one you think my mother."

"Shamed o' her! Lordy, boy! She's a true woman, an' a lady borned an' bred."

"She doesn't know that I'm alive, then?"

"Not as we knows on."

"Who was the Indian woman who is thought to have stolen me?"

"I ain't got much use fer Injuns, you see; an' I don't know none of 'em — praised be God! But I've heerd this one was Seeky or Cheeky, or some sich name."

"H'm! I half knew it: Sequa, you mean."

"You knowed her?"

"I met her once — a very handsome woman."

"Awful bad an' shameless lookin', I'm a-thinkin'; but you see, I don't keer much fer Injuns."

And these were the things that Motier Du Val, or whosoever he might be, learned concerning himself from the lips of Peggy McFaddin. The situation was a little clearer. Accepting as true all that Peggy had told him — and, M. Du Val being in mid-ocean, Motier had no other source of information than the sailor's wife — he knew who his mother was; but his father? Motier felt something akin to bloodthirstiness at the thought. The man must needs be a betrayer or a bigamist, perhaps the principal in Sequa's kidnapping venture, undoubtedly a would-be child-poisoner, and certainly a hypocrite of deepest dye. And this was his father? Faugh! the word father, applied to such a Thing, tasted badly in the mouth.

Motier contrasted this type of creature with the high-minded, noble-hearted man whom he had called father until now, and whom he would still call father until M. Du Val with his own lips disclaimed the tie. Never had man been kinder to a son than had this one been to Motier; wealth and position, love and fatherly

protection, and a perfect sympathy in all things: these were what M. Du Val had given to him.

And that other man! What was his heritage? A clouded birthright, a name that stood for dishonor and unmeasured deceit, and the mark of Cain upon that paternal brow.

Then Mary Ross, his mother? His heart warmed toward her; but yet not as a son's toward his mother. Time alone could bring that affection. She had been terribly wronged; and his first act would be to seek an interview with her, and learn his father's name. After that would come the righting of the wrongs. He turned Fleetfoot's head toward Beechwood. Then he remembered Peggy's words and feared that undue haste might involve the good woman and her husband in deep trouble. He decided, rather reluctantly, to defer his talk with Mary Ross until after his interview with McFaddin.

Stopping at the inn he wrote a note to the sailor, and dispatched it post-haste by Tonta. This was to keep Peggy from the wrath which might fall upon her should her husband learn that she had divulged the one great secret of their lives.

When Tonta had clattered down the road on his speckled pony, Motier came down again to the stable yard; and, swinging into the saddle, he turned Fleetfoot's head again toward Beechwood. For he would risk yet another talk with Alice before that which stood between them became known. As he saw the grey gables in the distance, and traced the outlines of the trees that overhung the garden, he saw again the girl in white, and felt the touch of her lips on his.

Alice! Alice! The name came to his lips on the tide of a half-choked sob, and he felt that nothing was left in the world but misery.

Arriving at Beechwood, Motier, meeting the footman and receiving the assurance that Alice was alone in the parlor, strode down the hall to the half-opened door.

"Alice!" he called, softly, as he thrust his head through the opening and glanced about the dimly lighted room.

The sound of voices came from the corner by the harpsichord. Motier turned and looked. Alice, fairer than ever, stood there; but Lord Durham was with her. More than that, his arms were about her, and their lips were met in a kiss. In that moment Alice caught sight of Motier's face, and gave a startled cry; but he shut the door behind him, and hastily leaving the house rode back to New Bern.

"Boggs was right," he growled, as Fleetfoot galloped down the road. "Durham has the lucky dice. I wish him joy." But in his heart was the longing love for Alice — Alice as he had thought her in the other days.

Motier went to his room at the inn, and wrote a hurried letter. He worded it thus:

"Dear Alice: I have made an unfortunate discovery which so alters our relations that the recollection of our past happiness is embittered. It seems that the fortune-teller spoke better than we knew. I shall always regard you with such love as a man can give a sister, but the warmer attachment seems ill-advised at present. For a while, farewell. MOTIER DU VAL."

"There!" he said, as he folded the sheet. "If she can find what that means, she'll know more than I do. I can read it two ways; she may read it a hundred." He rang for Tonta.

"Tonta," he said, when the boy appeared, "take that letter to Miss De Vere."

"Want go fast?" asked the Indian, taking the note from the table.

"Take as long as you please — all the afternoon if you wish."

Tonta's eyes opened. Hitherto his missions to Beechwood had been with orders to "ride like thunder."

"But Caiheek want answer?" he suggested.

"Not one word! If you bring back an answer, boy, I'll —" He shook his pipe in Tonta's wondering face — "I'll dig out your heart and feed it to the landlord's dogs! Take this shilling, and buy yourself poor."

When Motier was alone he stood up with a great yawn, and walked to the window.

"Were I not a fool," he reflected, staring through the grimy pane, "I would cut loose from North Carolina, and from all of the good people who are mixing my affairs, and would keep father — that is, Monsieur Du Val — in France for the rest of his life. Then we might live as we have always lived: father and son, son and father, with none to molest us. Hanged if I don't think I'll do it! But — no; that would be the act of a coward. The situation is here: here will I face it."

A sudden thought came to him: "If women swarmed about my cradle as they do around other

babies," he reflected, "some one in this little town must be familiar with the mark on my arm — the three red cherries. Question: who can that person be?"

Then he looked down at Ocebee's brother's pipe. "That's a curious looking snake the heathen carved on that bowl," he mused. "If a serpent typifies the devil, his Majesty must be a joyful fellow; for the Cherokee has carved him with a grin on his face."

CHAPTER XXXII

Murder

TONTA found McFaddin at home with his wife and handed him the note.

"A letter fer me!" exclaimed the sailor. "Be n't you off yer course, boy? I never got no letter in my life."

"Him for you — Caiheek send him," replied Tonta.

"Blast my peepers!" said Bob, turning the paper about in his hands. "I can't make nothin' out 'n these here fish-hooks. Peg, ol' gal, read it fer me."

Peggy adjusted her spectacles. "'Mr. McFaddin: My good friend'—" she started.

"Mister, eh? Well, that's polite. An' I reckon I'm his good frien' too. It's him what tackled Jake Cantwell, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's him; an' you know him besides, too."

"Well, pay out some more of it."

"'Dear Mr. McFaddin'—"

"You read that wunst."

"I'm a-startin' from the fust — it's easier. 'Dear Mr. McFaddin'—"

"That's three times. Fer Gawd's sake read the letter!"

"I'm a-readin' it the bes' I can; but yer so interrupshus."

"Ain't you never goin' to swing cl'ar? Too much foolin' with yer anchor, Peggy. Haul in yer bow-lines."

" 'Dear Mr. McFad —"

" 'Dear Mr.' dev — But go on, Peggy. I ax yer parding."

" 'My good friend: you told me once that you felt under obligations to me'—"

"I did, Peggy; an' so did you. I don't forgit: go on."

" 'I have a great favor to ask of you — one that none else can grant me'—"

"Hol' hard, thar, Peggy! Lemme see that." He took the paper and scanned it curiously.

"I don't see it," he said, at last.

"You got it wrong side upwards, Bob; but I s'pose it's all the same to you."

"I tell you, Peg, edication's powerful! That 'ere thing looks like shoal water to me. I can't make nothin' out'n it: steer me out yerself."

" 'Please meet me to-night under the big maple by the river, below 'Squire Cantwell's. If you come in your boat, that place will suit you best. A good time would be about moonrise. I will be there at that hour; and if you meet me, you will greatly oblige, Motier Du Val.' "

Peggy folded up the note. "He's heard somethin' 'bout hisself; an' he's foun' out you knows."

"Reckon so, Peggy?"

"Sartin."

"An' what must I do?"

"Go an' see 'im, Bob; an' make a clean breast of it. The boy's got a right to know; an' you said yerself,

it's ag'in' natur' thet he shouldn't. He's smart enough to fin' it out hisself; but yer an hones' man, an' you owe it to 'im to tell 'im. Remember, Bob, he fou't fer us; an' you promised."

"I'll go, Peggy. Here you Injun! What's yer name? Tawnter? Well, Tawnter, tell him I'll be thar."

Tonta swung into the saddle and galloped off. When he had gone McFaddin turned back to Peggy.

"I've got to see the 'Squire anyhow. One trip'll do fer the both. He's been at me ag'in to-day."

"What's he want now?"

"Wants us to go on another cruise."

"Whar to?"

"Anywhar to git cl'ar of us. But he'll have to come down han'some. We're a-ridin' easy here; an' we can't cut cl'ar our moorin's jes' to 'bleege the 'Squire. 'Twould be ag'in natur' to go fer nuthin'."

In the meantime Tonta, hurrying back to New Bern, met Sequa by the shores of the Trent. The woman seemed to feel a great anxiety for the safety of Tonta's Caiheek; and she extorted from the boy all the knowledge which he had gained at the McFaddin house. Then her dark eyes glowed, and her lithe figure trembled as she told the boy that she would go to the maple tree at moonrise and would hear what passed between Motier and the sailor.

McFaddin announced about dusk that it was time for him to start for New Bern.

Peggy, brushing off his coat, began giving advice to her liege-lord. "Bob, I've been a-thinkin' 'twould be better fer you to keep off from the 'Squire to-night.

I've got some notion meetin' him won't be good fer you: he's too tricky. Did you promise 'im pos'tive?"

"No, not pos'tive; but I said I'd come ef I could."

"Then you can't, Bob; an' that means you mustn't. He'd turn you off yer duty. Promise me you'll go straight to the boy."

"I answered the gentleman I would, didn't I? No 'Squire can't keep me from it."

"But don't risk 'im, Bob. Hev I ever tol' you nothin' that warn't fer yer own good?"

"Never, ol' woman: true es a compass."

"Then promise me, Bob."

"Sartin sure. Give us a kiss, ol' gal."

"Good bye, Bob!"

"Good bye? Why not good ev'nin'? I ain't goin' fer good."

"I feel kinder queer 'bout yer goin', Bob, but I reckon it's all right."

"Don't bother yer head, Peggy," he shouted, as he started up the road, "they can't cut my riggin'."

Reaching New Bern and moving toward his rendezvous, McFaddin saw the light from Cantwell's window shining bright and clear across the front lawn. He felt tempted to go in, thinking the 'Squire might speak of something to his advantage. But remembering his promise to Peggy he passed by the house. Then he slowed down in his walk and looked back over his shoulder. He fancied he saw Cantwell moving about in his parlor. McFaddin stopped short. "What harm can thar be in findin' what the 'Squire wants to see me fer?" he muttered. " 'Twon't do no hurt, an' Peggy'll

never know it. He can't turn me from doin' the squar' thing by the boy." And he retraced his steps and went to Cantwell's house.

'Squire Cantwell, smooth-shaven and ministerial, sat within his sanctum.

"If I could be sure now of McFaddin," he was thinking, "all would go well; for with Mary's pride and generosity, and with McFaddin's mouth shut, I can defy Fawn — the villian! the cormorant! He would feed on my very bones! And he was my friend once! Damn such people!"

A knock sounded on the door.

"Come in!" called Cantwell.

Bob McFaddin entered, and sat down in a chair by the door.

"Glad to see you, McFaddin," said the 'Squire. "I've just been thinking of you. But why so late? I expected you much sooner."

"I had to steddy over the situat'on, yer Honor," replied the sailor.

Cantwell gave him a swift glance. "Ah, yes! I have studied it too, McFaddin. I've been thinking that you and Peggy are getting along in years; and I believe it my duty to provide for you — you've been in my service so long. My agent in Habana writes me that Americans all do well in that city. What do you say to a snug little store there? I'm willing to start you on two hundred pounds. Will you go?"

McFadden looked carelessly about at the mottoes on the wall. "Thankee, yer honor!" he answered, dryly. "That looks like cl'ar sailin'; but I think I'll ship in another craft."

Cantwell frowned. "What! Leave me? Where would you go?"

"To them as might pay better," was the easy response. "Not to say two hundred pounds ain't han'some either; but the fac' is, money ain't the pay I wants: I wants a quiet conscience. Can you give me that? or ain't you got none to spar'?"

The 'Squire bit his lip and looked angrily across the table. "What are you talking about?" he asked, frigidly.

"Nuthin' much. But I'm goin' to clean out. The boy we burried is come to life ag'in; an' I don't keer to get jerked up fer babby-stealin'."

"I know all that," said Cantwell, testily. "It's this young fellow Du Val. Now tell me what you know. You see you can't deceive me. I know all about the dog you 'jacked up' in a coffin and called Mary Ross's baby."

For a moment the 'Squire seemed the master of the situation; but the sailor rallied his forces.

"If you know the hull thing, yer Honor," he laughed, "you don't need nothin' from me. But you don't know: yer only guessin'. You can't weather the storm that-a-way. Too much sail fer the wind, master. Jes' double-reef yer mains'il, an' take the bonnet off'n yer jib. Come down easy; an' p'r'aps I'll tell you."

"Can't you talk English?"

"Good enough English for you to understand," he bantered. "Now, here's fer the hull bus'ness!" And he told Cantwell all that he knew, and all that he had planned.

When McFaddin concluded his observations, the 'Squire brought his fist down upon his desk with a thump that jarred his Bible to the floor. "McFaddin, you're a scoundrel!" he shouted, turning very red in the face.

"'Bleeged fer the compliment, yer Honor. I'm a-goin' now. But, if you can read — bein' 's we was frien's so long — this here paper shows what I'm a-goin' fer." And he handed Motier's note to the 'Squire.

Cantwell read the letter and saw that his fancied security was slipping through his fingers. The proposed interview would ruin him. He handed the paper back to the sailor.

"McFaddin!"

"Yer Honor!"

"Listen now, and don't be a fool. Suppose you tell this story to the boy? What good will it do him? As the son of M. Du Val he is rich and happy. Would you make his condition better? or worse? Don't you know it would be worse?"

The sailor scratched his head. "P'r'aps it would," he said, doubtfully.

"The way to get a good conscience is to do good, isn't it?"

"Sartin."

"Do good then. Do as you would be done by. That's the Golden Rule, McFaddin; and that's my rule. Others can't always see it — as in the present case, for instance. But the Christian's path is a thorny one: our feet may bleed in following it. But, my friend, we have our reward; if not in this world, then in the

hereafter. And there's happiness, too: there's always happiness in doing right."

"You talks like a preacher, yer Honor."

"Ah, no! I am not worthy to be called a preacher. I am only a poor sinful man." The 'Squire's voice was softened with sublime humility. "I do many things I ought not to do; but we are all erring, benighted mortals. We can only try to do our duty: I try to do mine; and I want to do my duty by you in this matter." He paused for a reply; but the sailor was looking down at the floor. "I will do this duty if you will let me," he continued. "And I must be quick, for the hour of your appointment is almost at hand"

"Yes; it's nigh 'bout time."

"Tell me now, upon your word: does any one besides you know about this boy?"

"None but Peggy."

"What does she know?"

"Not much — 'cept 'bout the dog. I held back the partic'lar bus'ness 'cause, you know, women's women."

"Does she know that young Du Val is the child you carried to France?"

"How could she?" he answered, quickly, evading the point for Peggy's sake. "I never foun' it out myself till I met the old Frenchman on the street a month or so back."

"But didn't you tell Peggy?" The 'Squire's voice was sharp and quick.

"Not on yer life!" came out McFadden's lie. "Take me fer a damned fool!"

The 'Squire looked at him as a shrewd man looks

upon one who is without guile. He rubbed his hands together and smiled.

"The coast is clear, then," he said. "Now, McFaddin, here is my proposition. Meet your man and put him on the wrong track. As a reward I will send you and Peggy to Habana, or wherever else you please, with five hundred pounds. That is more than you could make in twenty years' hard work. It would make you comfortable, McFaddin; and at the same time it would be doing the right thing by the Frenchman."

The sailor's eyes sparkled. The temptation was beyond his resistance. "But you mought back out," he ventured to say.

"You can have the money now."

"An' you'll trus' me to tell 'im right?"

"Honest men are not suspicious, McFaddin: I will trust you." Then a sinister gleam shot from the 'Squire's eye. "But," he added, "I must know just what you say, and what he says. This I must know to steer my own course clear. I will go with you and hide in the bushes behind the maple. We have just half an hour to moonrise. Speak quick! Will you put him off on some other man?"

"I'll do it — 'twould be ag'in natur' to say no — so git out the articles. But mebbe you'd as lief pay me some money down, an' the rest in a bank dockyment."

"Very well, if it suits you that way."

So McFaddin was enriched by a Bank of England note of one hundred pounds, and by a paper which the 'Squire said was a draft for four hundred more.

Then they made ready to go to the maple by the

river. While McFaddin scrutinized the picture of Ananias and Sapphira, Cantwell took a queerly-shaped dagger from a desk drawer and slipped it into the inner pocket of his coat.

They went together into the night. Approaching the last cross-street before the woods, they saw a watchman slowly walking toward them.

The 'Squire drew Bob back against a high fence. "Let's wait until that fellow turns the corner," he whispered. "He might follow and spy upon us."

The regular tramp, tramp, tramp grew fainter until it died out in the distance.

"We can go now," laughed Cantwell. "The rocks are out of our course."

"Be you cold, yer Honor?" asked McFaddin, turning quickly toward his companion. "Teeth's a-chatterin'."

"A little chilly, but not cold," was the answer.

"I fin' it bracin'," said McFaddin, throwing out his great chest. "Fac' is, I feels uncommon strong to-night, anyhow. A rig'lar nor'wester wouldn't shake me. It's all in a man's sperrits, yer Honor. I've had a gusty v'yage in life, but its all clear now fer me an' Peggy."

"Down yonder in Habana you'll have a good time, I guess," remarked Cantwell.

"Ef I don't go somewhars else. Thar's plenty o' waters to cruise in."

"But you won't come back here?"

"No, unless —"

"Unless nothing! You must never come back."

"My kin folks is all here; an' Peggy's, too."

"You can get along without them. You must swear to me that you'll never come back."

"Can't swar to nuthin' like that, yer Honor. I mought be driv' in by a storm."

"That won't do." The 'Squire's face whitened, and his hand stole into the bosom of his coat. "The path is narrow here," he said, falling a step behind the sailor. "We must take it single-file. Walk ahead, my friend: I'll follow."

They passed into the darkness of the wood, the good, pious 'Squire and the sturdy, unsuspecting seaman.

A moment later Cantwell returned alone, and quickly reached the street along which the watchman had passed. The man was there again, approaching at a distance of a hundred yards. Just then the moon struggled through the mist that lay low and heavy in the east. Its light fell upon the white face of John Cantwell, and it fell also upon his hand, where glistened a tiny drop of blood. The 'Squire hastily wiped off the blot.

Suddenly from the path behind him came a loud cry. "Ho! Watch! Help!"

The watchman sounded his rattle; another rushed out from a side-street, and the two ran forward together. Drawing nearer to Cantwell the first called out: "Run down, Hans, and see what's to pay. I must see who this is." He approached Cantwell.

"Ah! It's you, 'Squire?"

"Yes," answered Cantwell, steadily. "I heard a noise like a struggle down there, and I came out from the house to see what it was."

"I thought I saw you come the other way."

"You did. I had crossed the road; but finding everything quiet I had started back, when I heard that cry. Hurry down there! Some one seems in trouble."

A third watchman came running toward them. "Where's the row?" he called to the man who was just leaving Cantwell.

"Down the path by the river," answered the other. Then, saluting Cantwell with a touch of the cap, "Ev'ning, 'Squire!"

"Good evening, sir. If you find anything, and need me, I'll be in my office."

Returning to his home, the first care of the worthy 'Squire was to give attention to his toilet. He expected company; and a disordered apparel would not comport with the dignity of his office as magistrate. So he examined his sleeves, his vest, and his coat, and looked well at his knee-breeches and his silk hose. After this he polished his shoes and washed his hands — Justice is always white-handed — afterward combing his hair and smoothing each strand into its wonted place. After thus preparing himself, he sat down to await his visitors.

A few minutes later, with much confusion and stamping of feet came the three watchmen, leading Motier Du Val, calm and unresisting, into the presence of the honorable magistrate to answer for the murder of Robert McFaddin.

"My poor, honest mate!" exclaimed the 'Squire, when the watchmen had told their story. "You don't say that he is murdered! He was with me only

to-night, in the vigor of health and manhood. Then it was his voice which cried for help?"

Motier's head was held very high, and his eyes gleamed. "You are in error," he said, coldly. "It was my voice you heard. I found the man dying in the path; and I called the watch."

"That's won't do, young man," was the gruff retort of the chief-watchman. "It was the sailor's voice. And who was a-hurtin' you? what should you want help for? No, no; that's a good dodge, but it don't go here."

"Are you the magistrate?" asked Motier, glancing down at the puffed-up man.

"No; but —"

"Silence, gentlemen," requested Cantwell, with dignity. "The prisoner is entitled to a fair examination. But let us have everything in order. Now, Mr. Clincher, make your report in writing. Here are pen and paper. Sit down."

The evidence was conclusive enough. McFaddin had been found with two wounds — one in the back, the other in the breast. The external shape of both of these stab-marks was that of a cross. In the prisoner's possession was found a dagger of the form necessary to have made such a wound. Cantwell's astonishment was genuine. He could in no way account for Du Val's ownership of such a dagger. But those who watched thought that his surprise came from the shock of the knowledge of Du Val's guilt.

"I regret, Mr. Du Val," the 'Squire observed, looking into Motier's unmoved face, "I regret that I must keep you in custody to-night. The law, you see

is rigid." Cantwell bent forward, with his elbows on his desk. "It is a sad thing, young man," he said, with a kindly ring in his voice, "to see one of your promise so early in the path of crime. I recommend to your prayerful consideration the pious maxim, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'"

"Spare your sermon," retorted Du Val; then with biting sarcasm. "Do your duty only — if you know it."

"I think I know it," returned the 'Squire, sharply.

Cantwell wrote two brief notes. "Mr. Clincher," he said, "hand this note to your captain. This other is your order for the close confinement of the prisoner. Good night, gentlemen! Good night, M. Du Val!"

The next day the prisoner was committed, without bail, to await the convening of the superior court.

CHAPTER XXXIII

627 Jeremiah Lane

DUVAL had been three days in iron-chained durance before anything occurred to vary the monotony of his imprisonment. The hours and the days went by with no signal from the outside world; with nothing to tell him of what took place in the streets beyond his prison walls. Now and then, at long, irregular intervals, came the striking of a bell, or a rising in the town's dull murmur, or the sound of a loud voice near his window. And he knew that the sun had risen thrice and had set twice. This knowledge came from the brightening and the fading of the patch of sky which showed through the tiny grated window high up in his cell wall. Compared with this later experience, his captivity in the Cherokee village had been pleasant; and he had wished many times for the rattle of the medicine-man's chinchone to aid him in measuring the passing time.

On one of these days Motier had heard the tolling of the bell which marked the hour of McFaddin's funeral. The sound was not a cheerful one; for Peggy had been his friend, and on her account he regretted the sailor's death. But he wondered if she believed the watchmen's story.

The evidence, as Motier heard it at the inquest, was

damning. In all that the witnesses told there were but three kernels of truth: but those three! Motier shrugged his shoulders as he thought of them. He had been found with blood upon his hands, and bending over the body of a man who had been killed by just such a dagger as the one which had been found in his possession; and in McFaddin's pocket was the Frenchman's letter arranging the meeting of the two on that very spot and at that precise time. What would a jury do with these facts? Assuredly the case had a black look.

It had taken Motier but a few moments to decide who had killed McFaddin. The fact that the dead man's wounds had been made by a dagger like his own, pointed conclusively to one man. That man was the father of the one who had dropped the poniard on the day that he fired upon Du Val in the forest. Motier remembered the thought which had come to him when he took the oddly-shaped dagger from Tonta and dropped it into his satchel: "I wonder if the other one will ever turn up." And, verily, it had — in most unpleasant manner. He had carried its mate on the night of McFaddin's death, and on many previous occasions, as all men in that country at that time bore some weapon of defense. In this instance, however, the dagger had become an instrument of offense, and that without any man's design.

Little of comfort came to Motier's mind in those days. A week earlier his thoughts of Alice would have served him as well as they had among Ocebee's people; but now even that was taken from him. The Alice of the present brought reflections that were gall and

wormwood to him: the Alice of the past filled his heart with an unutterable longing, and he strove hard to keep that memory from the sullying touch of her later faithlessness. Fair and radiant, with the glory of the sun in her golden hair, and with heaven's own blue in her eyes, he saw her a thousand times a day; and when the picture came to him, he would bend his forehead to his knees, and with the cold iron of his chains pressing against his face, would think and wonder: "Does she care?" And he could see her face and hear her voice as the answer would return: "Must I tell you that I do care?" Then the image would fade away, and the light would go out of the world; and Motier would reach out his arms with the clanking of chains and would cry from the depths of his heart, "O God! Take anything else; but give her unto me!"

On the third day Motier evolved an idea concerning the identity of his father, and his mind was working swiftly through a tangled maze of fact and theory. Then it was that a measure of relief came to him; for, though he knew it not, the De Veres and Boggs and Durham had worked with tireless energy for his release under bond, and, failing in that, for the betterment of his condition. In the latter effort they succeeded and, at the moment when Motier had all but solved the problem of his parentage, the jailer brought in a blacksmith and relieved him of his irons. Then, when he had straightened out his stiffened limbs, and had learned to walk without his weight of chain, Motier was taken to an upper room, bright with sunshine and comfortable in its furnishings.

In this room, within an hour after his removal,

Motier resumed his work upon the problem. He was interrupted by the entrance of 'Squire Cantwell.

Du Val arose and looked his visitor in the face until the eyes of the magistrate sought the floor.

"You honor me, monsieur," said Motier, with extravagant politeness, "pray take my chair, and tell me why you grace my cell with your presence."

Cantwell, flushing a little, took the proffered seat. Motier saw that he labored under excitement.

"Mr. Du Val, circumstances have come to my knowledge," began the 'Squire, with a forced benign smile, "which induce me to believe you innocent, notwithstanding the weight of the evidence against you. These circumstances, however, would hardly admit of proof in a court of justice; and I cannot, therefore, give you legal aid. But, as I committed you, and as the matter has been a great deal on my mind, I wish to help you by the only means within my power."

Motier, seeing nothing to be gained by kicking the 'Squire from the room, affected a diplomatic composure. "You are kind, Mr. Cantwell," he said, quietly. "It will please me to meet you on any reasonable suggestion you may make. Your plan, sir?"

Cantwell smiled benevolently. "It is simply this," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper. "I can manage your escape from prison, and send you off on my vessel, the *Leopard,* to France, where you will be safe. Giving you your freedom in this manner, I make but one condition."

"And that condition?" asked Du Val coldly.

"That you promise never to return. For if you came back to New Bern, however late the day, it might lead to an exposure of my part in your escape."

A faint smile played about Motier's lips. "Again let me say that you are kind, Mr. Cantwell. Your proposition is a generous one; but, with your single condition, its acceptance by me is impossible."

Cantwell started with surprise. "But why not?" he queried, with an angry look in his eyes. "You know that if you stand your trial you must be condemned and hanged."

"Oh, yes; I dare say you are right," Motier answered, carelessly. "The testimony of the watchmen is largely stupid invention; and the dagger seems to have fitted the wounds quite well, considering that those wounds were made by another weapon. I will be condemned, no doubt; and then they will hang me. It will all be in God's own time. I will say, however, that were the doors of the prison open now, I would walk out; but it would be with the settled purpose of coming back again when my friends learned whose dagger is the mate to mine; for when they know that they will know who killed Bob McFaddin!"

Cantwell quailed under the eyes of the prisoner; but he maintained a wonderful composure. "Well," he said, with some asperity, "my skirts are clear. If you are hanged it is your own fault."

"In a measure, sir; but primarily some one else's fault. I cannot consent, however, to live with the stain of murder on my name when I know that it belongs somewhere else; and, more than that, when I know on whose name it does belong."

The 'Squire turned abruptly away. "You will not repeat this offer of mine?" he asked, as he walked toward the door.

"No."

"Well, I'm sorry for you. I've done all I can. Good morning, sir!"

"Good morning!"

After Cantwell had left the cell Motier walked to the barred window and stood looking reflectively toward the wall of the adjacent building. He had come as near as was prudent to facing Cantwell with his accusation. Had not the proofs been in Cantwell's own hands, he would have dared more. Then, too, his present comforts meant something to him; and an open breach with the 'Squire might send him back to the down-stairs cell.

While pondering upon these matters he heard through a broken window-pane two voices from the nearby street. One he recognized in its first word.

"Good morning, Simon!" it said, in well-modulated tones. "It seems strange to see you walking about the streets. The store usually buries you from human gaze."

The other voice was full and round, and Motier knew it to be Fawn's. "My good friend," was the answer. "I was going to your house. But how came you in the jail?"

"It's a sad thing, my dear Simon. I've been trying to impress some spiritual truths upon that graceless young Du Val; but he gives no heed to the blessed Word. He's a bad character, Simon, a very hardened young wretch."

"Well, he ought to be," was the quick retort, "seeing he's your own —"

"H'sh!" warned Cantwell. "He may hear you."

"Why, doesn't he know?"

The answer was inaudible, and the rest of the conversation was lost as the two men passed up the street.

Motier's face was a little pale as he sat down, raised his legs to the table and filled and lit the corn-cob pipe which some one's influence had procured for him.

"Fawn saved me further work on my problem," he mused, with a bitter smile. "But the result confirms my theories. So Cantwell, who preaches layman's sermons on Christianity, and who has the honor of being an abductor, a poisoner, a murderer, and several other kinds of nice fellow, is my father! Therefore, I did spill my own brother's blood by the pool of Yaunocca. Cain and Abel, with an Eve who mistook the devil for her Adam! Truly, a delightful situation!" And as he reflected upon it he threw back his head and sent a twisting smoke-ring up toward the ceiling. "I think," he muttered, "that England's greatest poet wrote: 'The miserable have no other medicine, but only hope.' That goes to prove that Monsieur William Shakespeare never tried to find a dose of his own prescription within the walls of the New Bern jail."

Three days more went by, on the first of which Motier was given books to read and paper on which to write. He noticed, however, that everything which came to him was carefully examined, lest it might contain a deadly weapon, or some instrument to aid

in his escape. This scrutiny amused Motier, and it also revived the thought, first suggested in impracticable form by Cantwell, of ending his captivity by some other means than that of being tried and hung.

He walked about his cell many hours in each day, trying to devise the means by which he might free himself, yet balking his every plan by asking himself the one question: "What would my guards be doing all this time?" He rather fancied that they would be pounding him upon the head with clubs, and shooting at him with blunderbusses; so all his projects dissolved into thin air.

On the sixth day of his imprisonment the jailer brought him a pocket Bible, handsomely bound, and fastened with a gold clasp. Motier sat in his chair with his elbows on the table and turned the book over and over in his hands; for the binder's workmanship had made it a volume of rare beauty, and as such it pleased him.

"Who brought this?" he asked, turning toward the door.

But the jailer was gone, and the door was barred.

Holding his head to one side to clear his eyes from the cloud of smoke which had just escaped his lips, Motier unfastened the clasp and opened the Bible. He turned back to the fly-leaf.

There, in exquisitely formed letters, was the name Lucille Creighton Ashburne.

Motier gave a little gasp; and his pipe, half slipping from his teeth, showered burning tobacco down his waistcoat front.

"Lucille!" he muttered, brushing the sparks from his clothing, "at this time, of all times!" And bewildered he stared at the name upon the page.

"The serpent on Ocebee's brother's pipe couldn't smile at this," he said, at last, laying down the book and refilling his corn-cob. "There's something vast and mysterious about the whole thing."

Lighting the tobacco, he threw his tinder-box on the table. Then, puffing up his pipe, he again picked up the book. After staring for several minutes more at Jack's widow's name, he turned over the page.

"H'm! the plot thickens! Here she is again — but different. 'Lucille Creighton, 627 Jeremiah Lane, Norwich, England.' Curious! Norwich is all right; and so is England. But Jeremiah Lane! The world never heard of that." But there stood the line: 627 Jeremiah Lane. Motier was perplexed. But, smoking furiously, he began to make deductions. Lucille was once more in New Bern: else how came the book to him? But was her mind deranged? 'Jeremiah Lane' certainly seemed an indication of raving idiocy, yet the inscription was clear and beautifully penned, while the writing of lunatics frequently degenerates with their minds. Then, if the woman was sane, what meant 627 Jeremiah Lane?

Motier, with a growl of disgust, started on a new train of argument. With Lucille in New Bern, and sane, and trying to help him, was she just the one to send him a Bible? Piety she had not, and why should her thoughts turn to giving spiritual aid to other people, when she had never sought it herself? Lucille's talents were intensely practical; her mind was quick

and acute; her powers of intrigue were unsurpassed: what then lay behind 627 Jeremiah Lane?

Motier reflected. Jeremiah? He knew no man of that name: nor had he ever heard of a city, or a ship, or a horse, or a book — But stay! yes; a book!

He hurriedly ran through the pages of the Bible, past the Proverbs, past Ecclesiastes, past the Song of Solomon, over the pages of Isaiah, to the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Here was the Jeremiah: what was the 627?

Laying his pipe upon the table, he bent over the book. "Jeremiah, six twenty-seven," he whispered, his hand trembling as he turned the leaves. "Jeremiah, three; Jeremiah, five — and six. Now, verse nine — eighteen — twenty-seven." He read the verse through:

"I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among thy people, that thou mayest know and try their way."

Motier shook his head. "Clear enough, no doubt; but how does it fit my case? 'That thou mayest know and try their way!' Whose way? 'Squire Cantwell's way? God help me, no! Or Lord Durham's? Bah! Or Lucille's? Had the chance once, and refused it. Or my own? I couldn't if I would. Well; there's a misfit somewhere."

He looked thoughtfully down at the book. The paper was slightly rumpled. He ran his fingers across the page to smooth it down. A quick light leaped to his eyes. Again he passed his finger-tips up and down over the words of the prophet, and his lips formed in a smile.

Bending down until his eyes were close to the book

he scanned it eagerly. Here and there about the page, without apparent rule or order, were tiny punctures in the paper. He counted them. There were thirty-eight; and each of them was in the centre of a printed letter. The first pin-hole was in the second word of the twenty-seventh verse of Jeremiah vi.: and that accounted for 627 Jeremiah Lane. The last puncture was beyond the middle of the fifth verse of the next chapter.

"Good for Lucille!" he murmured. "Now let's get the pin-stabbed letters in their order."

A brief silence followed.

"H'm! 'Assistant — jailer!' Didn't know there was any."

Another silence, while Motier's eyes crept down the page.

"'Your — friend.' Thank heaven I've got one! 'Assistant jailer your friend.' Yes; I expect I'll find him a very congenial fellow."

A longer silence. Then Motier began spelling, one letter at a time.

"'E-s-c-a-p-e — t-o —' To what? Ah! 'to-night!' And that checks off all the pin-holes. Lucille, I don't love you much; but I swear you're a wonder! But how are you going to work it? Escape? and to-night? My dear girl —"

Motier stared at the wall; and the smile faded from his lips. "The assistant jailer," he muttered, softly. "When he enters the scene, something may happen to him. But how? and what?"

The hours passed, and the afternoon grew late. Motier sat in his chair, and now and then "to-night"

would come to his lips; and he would smile, for he knew that, somewhere upon the broad Atlantic, To-night on wings of sable was sweeping Carolina-ward.

Twilight came, and still the gruff voice of the jailer sounded in the corridor. Motier lit his candle, and began reading the rest of the book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Eight o'clock — nine o'clock — ten o'clock — yet the assistant jailer had not come.

Suddenly Motier started. The sound of a slipping bolt grated on his ears. A mouse, like a tiny ball of grey fur, scurried across the cell floor. Then the door opened with rasping hinges. A keen-eyed man, enveloped in a long cloak and wearing a broad slouched hat, stepped upon the threshold.

Motier half arose from his chair. The man turned on his heel and leaned lazily against the door-jamb, his back toward the prisoner. Du Val felt the cool night breeze on his face, and knew that the outer doors were open. He crept, half crouching, toward the man. The assistant jailer stood as motionless as a statue.

With a tigerish spring Motier was upon the man, and had him down on the corridor floor.

Half stunned though he was, the fellow looked up with a short laugh. "Howlin' Whales! Don't bust out my brains!" he growled. "Lemme up, an' take my hat an' coat an' run like the devil!"

Du Val gasped with astonishment. Then he pulled the man up; and, holding him with one hand by the slack of his under coat, he pulled off the cloak and the hat, and threw them into place on himself.

"Who are you?" he asked, as he loosened his grip on the man.

"Don't you keer who I am. Skin up the street like you was a musket-ball; an' when you meets anybody say, 'What o'clock is it?' The first man what sez, 'Deep in the night,' is yer friend. Now, fer Gawd's sake! cut out an' run fer yer neck! Screechin' Crabs! never mind me! Run!"

And Motier ran.

When the prisoner had gone, the assistant jailer pinched his arms and felt nervously about his ribs. "They calls that 'ere feller a Frencher," he mumbled, with a broad smile. "Perhaps he is one; but French or Car'lina, he durned near smashed me to glory." And the Man who sat on the Barrel in Fawn's store locked the empty cell, blew out the lights, slammed the outer doors behind him and darted down toward the river.

Motier walked rapidly up the street. A block beyond the jail he met a man staggering toward him.

"What o'clock is it?" he asked, sharply.

"Shoo! Shink you shteal m' watch, donsher? Try s'mother feller, an' leave me 'lone!" And with a hoarse guffaw the inebriate made a wide veer and crashed cursing into the fence.

Motier, laughing under his breath, went swiftly onward. A second man met him further up the street.

"What o'clock is it?" asked Motier.

"Something near eleven," was the answer.

"Thanks! Good night!"

Close at this man's heels came another.

"What o'clock is it?"

"Deep in the night!"

Motier drew a long breath. "And shoaling off toward morning," he laughed.

"Keep your mouth shut!"

"Did you say 'please?' "

The man laughed; and, linking his arm in Motier's, led him on to the confines of the town. There he stopped and turned. Motier tried to see his face by the starlight.

"Don't you know me?" the man asked, in familiar accents.

"Captain Maynard — again!"

"Luckily, yes."

"God is good."

"You ought to think so by this time."

A few minutes later the heads of five horses were turned southward, entering into the forest that lay between them and Charleston. Tonta led the way; next came Captain Maynard, and Mr. Hadleigh Creighton, of Norwich, England, and, after them all, Motier Du Val, and Lucille Creighton of 627 Jeremiah Lane.

The last two rode with horses close together, and the sound of their voices was low and earnest. But the wind in the pines seemed to bear on its breath, "Motier! Motier!" and he turned in his saddle, and looked back through the darkness toward the gardens at Beechwood; and as he looked into the gloom the voice in his heart cried "Alice! Alice! God keep her safe."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"To My Mother — God Bless Her!"

THE authorities sought long and fruitlessly for Motier Du Val. Likewise, and vainly, did they search for the person who had drugged the jailer and the guards, and who had released the Frenchman from the prison; but not a clue could be found.

A year after Du Val's escape, Captain Maynard (whose pardon had been granted by Tryon's successor, Governor Martin, after strenuous effort on the part of Lord Durham) brought his wife from the caverns of Yaunocca, and reëstablished their home in New Bern in a house patterned after that which had burned nearly nineteen years before, and standing upon the same ground. Mrs. Maynard, amid familiar surroundings and under the constant care of Doctor Boggs and his colleague, Doctor Gaston, improved beyond all expectation; and after two or three years of this life her mind was as clear and as active as it had ever been.

Tonta was in Captain Maynard's service; and the boy's closest companion was Brown, the gardener, a keen-eyed man who spoke with a lazy drawl.

Mr. De Vere, weakened by a pulmonary trouble of many years' standing, had died a few months after Motier last saw him; and three years later — as is

often the way with handsome widows — Madame De Vere gave her hand in marriage to Lord Durham.

Five years passed by — the greatest years in American history. Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill had roared their shotted thunder against the hosts of King George; the North Carolinians had voiced their patriotic sentiments in the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence; the Liberty Bell had pealed out the death of tyranny; and Washington, with the Continental armies at his back, was waging iron-handed war against the country's foemen. Then came the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, at that time the greatest of North Carolina victories; and in that fight were men whose names stand high on the roll of American patriots.

There, fighting under Lillington and Caswell, was a stranger whose fame went throughout the Carolinas with the news of the fight. At first none knew who the man was. Then the wounded came home. Among them was Jemmie Dow, who years before had helped in the vain search for Mary Ross's child. And Jemmie told the whole story:

"I was cleanin' the colonel's mare at six o'clock one mornin'," he said to a group of friends at his bedside, "when I heard a horse comin' down the road like thunder. Jim Maxton was doin' sentry duty, an' Jim he sez, 'Halt!' an' the feller kept on comin'. I looked up thinkin' to see Jim perforate Mister Man right there. But Jim he yells again, 'Halt, or I'll shoot!' Then the man pulled in his horse a little an' smiled at Jim. Jim sez 'Good Gawd!' an' let the feller pass him. Sez I to myself, this must be Washin'ton or

some other big gun; but fearin' mistakes I takes a pistol and goes out to have my say at the feller. I hadn't no more'n got to the road when he come by like a cannon-ball. 'Who's there?' I yells. 'Look out!' he sez; an' he was gone afore I could pull a trigger. Thinkin' thet this wasn't right I ran to the Colonel's tent. An' there was the feller's grey horse standin' outside, an' in the tent the Colonel was shakin' the feller's hand. An' who d'you s'pose he was? That 'ere Du Val what they sez killed Bob McFaddin."

A murmur of astonishment came from his auditors.

"Yes, it was him," repeated Jemmie, vehemently. "An' he stuck by us through it all, too. I never seen such a man. If ever anybody played in luck Du Val was that feller. If some crazy red-coat tried to capture our regiment all by hisself, Du Val was the feller that caught the blasted Britisher and toted him into camp on his shoulder like a meal bag. One night a company of 'em rushed our pickets an' nigh scared us to death; an' what did Du Val do but jump on his horse an' yell, 'Come on boys!' an' he led us into the mess, an' cleaned out four of 'em hisself before we caught up with 'im."

Jemmie dropped back into his pillows for a moment's rest. Then he continued his story:

"When the real fightin' started," he said, with a sparkle in his eyes, "that 'ere Du Val mixed in the thickest of it. A crowd of red-coats in a clump o' pine woods was givin' us fits, an' we couldn't stop 'em. Then Du Val he goes to the Colonel, an' very respectful he sez, 'Colonel, give me ten men an' I'll drive the enemy to the devil.' So the Colonel sez yes; an' Du Val, a-sittin' on his horse, looks around a-smilin'

an' sez in his easy-goin' way, 'Who's the ten that wants to go?' An' fifty of us sez 'We are!' Then he laughs an' pulls out his big sword an' sez, 'Eat 'em up, boys!' An' gosh! we did eat 'em up, too. Du Val he went acrost that field like bullets wasn't made that could hit him. They was shootin' at us simply terrible, an' the Frenchman's horse went down first pop. He landed on his feet, an' yells, 'Clean 'em out, boys! clean 'em out!' An' we kept a-goin'.

"I swear it was awful. Bullets was hummin' like yellow-jackets. Du Val's hat flew off his head with two holes shot in it at once, an' a minute afterwards he wrapped his sword hand in his handkerchief an' stood laughin' at the Britishers in the woods. Our boys was droppin' fast. We closed in on 'em, an' little Rush Gibson from Hillsboro' runs ahead of Du Val wavin' a flag an' yellin', 'Charge! charge!' like he was a general of a brigade. Du Val tries to hold him back, but Gibson goes crazy an' runs right at 'em, shoutin' an' wavin' his flag. Then Du Val he chases Gibson an' the two gets to the woods together, with us a-follerin' fifty yards behind. A red-coat officer steps out an' shoots a pistol squar' in Gibson's face, an' the boy drops in a heap. Quicker than lightnin' we seen Du Val's sword shine, an' the Britisher goes down with his head split down to his grinnin' mouth. Then Du Val, his head bare an' his black hair flyin' in the wind, looks back an' smilin' soft like a woman sez, 'Come on boys, fer Gibson's sake!' An' did we come? Well, I reckon so! We drove 'em pilin' into the creek an' put 'em out o' business in two minutes. Then Du Val, comin' back, picks up little Gibson an' sez, 'Is

the boy's mother livin'?' An' I sez yes; an' he sez, 'Wrap 'im in his flag an' bury him; an' tell his mother that her boy charged the hull British army an' died a soldier's death."

"Then," said Jemmie, with a weary sigh, "they shot me in the back as we was gettin' round to the lines, an' I had to drop out. But Du Val's a-fightin' yet. I never seen such a man. When he laughs an' throws back his head an' sez, 'Come on, boys!' there ain't a man in the hull army that wouldn't foller him straight to hell if he started that way. I only wish I was with 'im now."

And so did the news of Motier Du Val come to the little town of New Bern. And the people wondered how it would all end.

Months passed, and as the war waxed fiercer Du Val's name became more frequently heard, until every fireside in the Carolinas echoed the praise of his daring.

Then one noon, when the devout townspeople were closing a service of prayer for the Continental arms, some one whispered at the church door that Caswell, with a dozen men, was coming down the road. The benediction was pronounced, and the congregation filed into the street, where had gathered already a throng numbering many hundreds. Up the road, in a cloud of dust, was a party of horsemen. Nearer they came, until Colonel Caswell's martial figure brought a cheer from the throats of the people. At the sound of applause one horse bolted, and a broad-shouldered young fellow, in uniform of blue and buff, and mounted on a plunging grey charger, dashed down the street.

As he passed before the church the horseman halted and looked up. A voice in the crowd yelled, "Du Val!"

Motier gave a swift glance over the multitude of faces before him. Within the church's portal he saw Lord Durham and his wife. He raised his hat and smiled; and at the salutation a great yell went up from the crowd.

"Du Val! Du Val!"

Reining in his horse with an iron hand, he bowed again and again at the crowd that thronged about him.

Then some one cried, "Remember Gibson!"

That had been Motier's battle-cry; and a hundred voices picked it up. Arms were waved with wild enthusiasm, hats were tossed in the air, and handkerchiefs fluttered in the breeze. Again the shout was raised, and the crowd carried it on and on, until New Bern rang from the river to the forest with the soldier's cry: "Remember Gibson!"

Then followed the hoarse yell, "Du Val! Du Val!" And while the air quivered with the mighty shout, Motier rode down between the lines of cheering villagers, and with his head held high and with a touch of pride about his firmly-set lips, delivered himself into the hands of Justice, to stand trial for the murder of Robert McFaddin.

The news of Du Val's voluntary return swept through the town like wildfire. Some who knew him had thought that he might some time come back for trial; but the greater number, believing him guilty, scouted the idea. Yet, he was there; and few believed that he could escape the penalty of the crime which was laid at his door.

HE RAISED HIS HAT AND SMILED.

On the day of the trial the courthouse was filled to the uttermost. Throughout the long ordeal the prisoner faced the throng with a coldness that bordered on indifference. Witness after witness told of the circumstances immediately following the murder; and when Cantwell, the last witness for the prosecution, took the stand, few within those walls doubted that Du Val would hang within the month.

But Lawyer Writman did wondrous things in the cross-examination of the 'Squire. When the attorney had concluded his work in that line, the court-room was in an uproar; for the reputation of Cantwell — the good 'Squire Cantwell — had been torn to shreds. When the defense opened, Writman continued his fight against the 'Squire; and that gentleman, his face pallid and his hands shaking as in an ague, began edging his way toward the door. Motier's attorney proved, among other things, that Cantwell had hired the Indian girl, Sequa, to steal Mary Ross's child; that he had told Peggy McFaddin the baby was in his way; that he had made an attempt, during the infancy of the prisoner, to compass his death by poisoning; that in April of 1771 he had conspired with his own son to shoot Du Val from an ambush; that three months afterward he had sent this same son to the mountains to engage Du Val in a duel, with a view to his death; and that by every means within his power he had sought to persecute the man who was now the prisoner at the bar. And why? Because he knew Du Val to be his son by Mary Ross, and feared that discovering this fact the young man might seek to adjust his mother's wrongs and thus disclose the fact that the virtuous Cantwell had two living wives.

Then by Sequa (who had risen to the dignity of a "Christian Indian") Writman showed that Cantwell had killed McFaddin and had thrown his dagger among the bushes, where Sequa had found it the moment it fell. He reinforced this testimony by that of Doctors Boggs and Gaston, and by Simon Fawn.

The physicians swore that, on exhuming the body of the sailor, they had found in the front surface of a vertebral bone a pointed piece of steel a quarter of an inch in length. The poniard which had been taken from Motier on the night of the murder was unbroken; but the one which Sequa had picked from the ground where Cantwell had thrown it was without its point. And the bit of steel in the vertebra fitted the broken blade of Cantwell's dagger. Furthermore, it was proved by measurement that the dagger blades were not originally of the same length, and that the one found upon Motier was too short to have pierced from the chest to the backbone of any man.

Then the evidence turned to the Bank of England note which Cantwell had sworn that he paid McFaddin half an hour before his death, and which was not found upon the body. Simon Fawn testified that Cantwell had come to him on the afternoon before the murder, saying that he wanted for immediate use a bank note of one hundred pounds. Fawn lent him the money, which he promised to refund the next day. The following morning Cantwell returned the note, which Fawn identified by its number. Upon this bill was a bloodstain, marked over and half concealed by several ink lines. The note had been fresh and clean when Fawn had lent it to the 'Squire. Then came the mute

evidence of the rough paper wallet which was found in the dead man's pocket, and which was soaked through and through with a bloodstain of the very size and shape of the one upon the banknote.

Thus came testimony upon testimony, until the evidence was closed; and the judge, without charge, gave the case to the jury; and the jury, without leaving the court-room, returned a verdict of "not guilty." Then, despite the thunderings of the judicial gavel, and the efforts of the sheriff and his deputies, the crowd surged to the front, and lifting Du Val into midair, carried him from the court-room amid such shouts and cheers as had never before sounded within the confines of New Bern, except on that morning when the people had cried, "Remember Gibson!"

When the sheriff, with a bench-warrant, sought for Cantwell, the good man was gone. And within the hour the 'Squire, in the stable behind his house, sought the death that Judas sought upon the Field of Blood; for he went out and hanged himself. His funeral cortege was a smaller one than McFaddin's, five years before.

Breaking from the crowd, Motier sought refuge in the inn. There he made the landlord take Ocebee's brother's pipe from the wall where his wife had hung it with a red ribbon four years ago, and with a bagful of tobacco he went to his old room to think over some things and to plan about some others.

His theory of his relationship to Cantwell and Mary Ross had been borne out by the little that M. Du Val (whom Motier, after his escape, rejoined in France) knew about the case. But such a father Motier would

never seek. So he straightway and unnecessarily excluded the 'Squire from his calculations. The 'Squire was doing, at that very moment, his own excluding.

Then, taking up the question of Mary Ross, Motier determined to see her at once, and to place her beyond all care and want. He would build a mansion near Beechwood and would persuade Mrs. De Vere — or Lady Durham, as she now was —to relinquish her hold upon Alice. Thus could all three, mother and son and daughter, live together in peace and happiness beneath one roof.

Then came a thought that struck Motier like a knife-thrust. By what name would he call himself? and by what name would he call his mother and his sister? Cantwell? Heavens, no! Not while a shred of honor lived in him would he ever take that name.

Motier was pacing up and down the floor. Suddenly, without a warning knock, the door burst open and Captain Maynard rushed into the room.

"Motier," he said, excitedly, "for heaven's sake come to my house!" He dragged Du Val toward the door.

"Hold on! Hold on! Let me get my hat and — Look out! you'll break my pipe! What's the matter at the house?"

Maynard pulled impatiently at Du Val's arm. "Something's in the wind," he said hurriedly. "Never mind locking your door. Come ahead. Your father's just come here from the South; and, hearing of your acquittal, came to my house. Margaret recognized him as her brother —"

Motier stopped short. "As what?"

"As her brother, Richard Dudley. Come ahead! I knew it all the time, but never spoke of it. He assumed the name for some political reason. Then Margaret asked him how you came to be his son —"

"Well, did he tell you?" Motier's question broke off in a laugh. They were now in the street, and were walking rapidly toward Maynard's house.

"Yes," answered Maynard, "he says you're Cantwell's son; but — " He stopped.

Motier pulled him around with a jerk. "But what?" he roared, glaring into Maynard's face.

"But I know better. Come on! Everything's in a mess. Your fa — Dudley, I mean, says that the will giving his estate to Cantwell instead of Margaret must have been forged by the 'Squire during his clerkship in a lawyer's office in Salisbury; and he has a letter bearing my forged signature, which explains the trouble between Richard and myself; then he says that on Margaret's account he bought the land that Cantwell, by the forged will, got when he thought Richard dead; and that he had it re-recorded in her name. Tonta says —"

"Hold on! You'll smash me into this tree. What's your everlasting hurry, anyway?"

"Don't be a mule: come on faster!"

Motier quickened his pace. "You were telling what Tonta said," he suggested.

"Tonta says that the baby you thought grew into yourself died in the woods."

"Died in the woods! Then who in thunder am I?"

"That's what I'm hurrying to find out."

"Hurry up, then! For heaven's sake! look out for that fence!"

"It's my own fence. Don't bother with the gate; jump over."

The two men rushed across the lawn and went through the doorway. The gardener at work in a lily-bed, looked up with a grin. "Squealin' Mud-turtles!" he muttered. "They've turned the Frencher loose. But he ain't no spider-legged flooer de lee! Ef he ain't Car'lina from his skelp to his heels, I'm a bloody, bat-eyed lunytic."

Maynard pulled Motier into the parlor. Wallannah stood with Doctor Boggs near the centre of the floor. At one side of the room were Lord Durham and Lady Durham and M. Du Val — or Richard Dudley, as it now appeared.

Boggs began the conversation. "Mrs. Maynard," he said, gently, watching her face with eyes that gleamed piercingly under their shaggy brows, "look carefully into this young man's eyes; then raise his left coat-sleeve and look at his arm."

The room was breathlessly silent. Mrs. Maynard stepped forward and looked at Motier as she had that afternoon at Yaunocca. Then dropping her eyes she took his hand and lifted the sleeve. The light fell upon the triple mark of the clustered red cherries.

"Arthur! My son!" she cried, as sobbing she threw her arms about his neck.

Boggs held back Maynard with a grip of iron. Lord and Lady Durham and Mr. Dudley started to their feet, but were warned back by the look of the doctor's eyes.

Motier stood like a carven statue, with one arm about Mrs. Maynard. His handsome face, with a sad smile on its lips and a look of pity in its eyes, was bent over Wallannah's head. She was sobbing brokenly as Motier with his one free hand softly smoothed her hair.

Then she raised her head, and again looked into his face. "Arthur," she said, with a low laugh, "I knew it all the time, for the spirits told me."

Boggs and Maynard exchanged quick glances as they heard Wallannah's laugh; for they feared the shock had thrown her back into the cloud of her former days.

Motier, sorely puzzled, knew not what to answer. "What did the spirits tell you?" he asked, tenderly.

"They told me that day on the mountain that Ocebee's prisoner was my son — the boy whom we all thought dead."

Her voice was growing stronger, and the light in her eyes was calm again. Boggs and Maynard each drew a long breath; for they knew that the danger had passed.

"I could not see you then as I do now," she went on, "for I lived in a dream for many, many years; but now I know that you are my own dear boy!"

Motier gave a helpless look at Boggs. The doctor answered with a smile. Maynard whispered a few words into his wife's ear. She smiled, and kissed Motier twice upon the cheek. Then Boggs led her from the room.

When the doctor returned he had a bundle of papers in his hand. Motier and Maynard were standing in

the middle of the room, each looking into the other's eyes, and each about to speak.

Motier had the first word. "I deeply regret, Captain, to have been the cause of any return of Mrs. Maynard's trouble —"

"Tut! tut! boy!" broke in Boggs, in thunderous tones. "Are you blind?"

Motier turned toward him. "Not blind," he answered, "but I'm very badly muddled, to say the least."

"Well, I'll unmuddle you." The doctor slammed a paper onto the table. "There's one affidavit; there's another; there's another; and there are six more." He glared defiantly at Motier.

The young man laughed. "Well, what about them?"

"They prove that you are Arthur Maynard. That's what about them!"

"But Sequa stole me from Mary Ross," protested Motier, looking from Boggs to Maynard and back again

"Sequa stole Mary Ross's baby; and it died in her arms before she got to New Bern. She came by Captain Maynard's house when it first caught afire. She knew where the child's room was, and ran up there to see if it was safe. She had Mary's dead baby in her arms and found Mrs. Maynard's live one on the bed. So she changed the one for the other; and this bunch of affidavits proves that you're the live one and not the dead one. That's a twisted sentence, but I guess you know what it means."

Motier, with a half-choked laugh, turned to grasp his father's hand.

The sudden report of a musket made them start.

A drawling voice drifted in at the window. "Croakin' Snails! Blowed his head clean off his neck. That 'ere kingfisher's been a-squawkin' long 'nough; an' durned if I didn't stop his suff'rin's this time."

An hour later Motier stood at the head of the table in his father's dining-room. At his right hand stood Captain Maynard, tall and broad-shouldered like his son. Beyond him was Lady Durham, handsome and stately; and at her side stood Lord Durham, his noble height and classic features marking him for a man among men. At Motier's left was Richard Dudley, graceful and patrician in every line; and Mary Ross, with the light of goodness in her comely face; and Ignatius Boggs, M.D., shaggy-browed but kindly-eyed, smiling quietly as one who has attained his dearest desires.

Motier raised his glass of Catawba, and looked over the glowing candles at the queenly, dark-robed figure at the table's foot. His throat tightened a little at the gladness of it all; then with a smile, and in a voice that thrilled to the hearts of all within the room, he called:

"To my mother — God bless her!"

And she smiled back at him with tears of joy in her eyes.

CHAPTER XXXV

In Which the Expected Happens

FTER supper Motier, leaving the guests in the parlor, stole through the back door and went down the lane toward the stable. The moon was still below the forests, but its light was in the sky; and Motier, pausing for a moment on his way, could see in clear-cut silhouette the familiar shapes of the mansions round about the town. There were the great trees that guarded the governor's palace — the princely house whose halls now rang with the steps of strangers, but whose every niche and alcove teemed with the whitening bones of its dead memories. And there, so far away that his eyes could scarcely pierce the gloom, were the elms that lined the graveled walkways of Beechwood. Under the elms had been the roses — roses white as her own pure brow — but all of that had been years and years before. The roses, perhaps, were dead; and she — he knew not where she was.

With a quick compression of the lips he turned and walked down the path.

A lantern's feeble light glimmered in the open stable door. Motier, with quick change of mood, laughed softly to himself.

"Tonta!" he called, "Tonta, you copper-colored rascal! Come here, or I'll thrash your hide to ribbons!"

The lantern dropped to the floor and went out. From the gloom came a wild cry.

"Caiheek come back!"

A lithe figure cleared at a single bound a rod of flower-bed and a waist-high hedge.

"Tonta told Cap'n Caiheek come back. Cap'n say no. Tonta tell Great Spirit if Caiheek no come Tonta make church burn. Great Spirit know Tonta no 'fraid — Caiheek come back."

Motier laughed. "Same crazy Indian," he said, grasping Tonta's arm with a grip that made the boy wince. "Come; we'll go to the stable."

Amid a babble of Indian extravagance, plentifully embellished with clumsy oaths in French and English and Cherokee, Tonta led the way. Together they entered the stable, and Tonta relighted the lantern.

"Where is he?" asked Motier, sharply.

Divining his master's meaning, Tonta guided him to a stall where a great black horse pawed the floor with restless hoofs. "Fleetfoot!" The horse whinnied and turned his head toward the light.

Motier stepped into the stall.

"No go there," cried Tonta, in terror. "Horse kick 'em Caiheek."

"Kick your grandmother," growled Motier. "Don't I know him?" And running his hand over the glossy back, he stepped in beside the horse.

Tonta relapsed into an awe-stricken silence.

"Fleetfoot," said Motier again.

The animal dropped his head into Motier's hand, and looked with almost human understanding into his master's face. Then with a low sound, something

between a whinny and a growl, he rubbed his nose against Motier's shoulder.

"I'd like to saddle you and tear some of these roads into powder, old fellow," said Motier, "but I've got a new father and a new mother and a crowd of friends at the house, and I can't go." Then, with a farewell pat on the velvety nose, Motier turned and left the stable.

Tonta was still silent.

"Thought he'd kick, did you, Cherokee?" laughed Motier.

"Horse no like Tonta," responded the Indian. "Tonta say 'good horse,' and horse feet go 'bang!' Dam! Tonta keep 'way."

Half way up the path Motier stopped. "Ho, boy!" he called. From the darkness came back a neigh, loud and clear and long. Motier chuckled softly. "He knows me now, doesn't he?" he asked of his companion.

"Horse no like Tonta," was all the answer the boy could give.

Du Val, entering the house, ascended to his room and made his evening toilet. This completed, he started down the hall. Near the head of the stairway he met Richard Dudley.

"Motier," said the elder man, in an unsteady voice, "you've been so much to me as my son through all the past years that I've persuaded your father and mother to keep your old Uncle Richard in the room next to yours, until such a time as you want to ship me back to France. You've been all the world to me, and — Bless you, boy! you're all the world yet!"

Motier took Dudley's hand and pressed it tightly. "You found mother and father easy to persuade, I

guess; for I arranged the matter an hour ago. Did you think for one moment that my foster-father, the man who has cared for me from the cradle, would have to go back to that grimy old castle in Auxerre? No, sir! You'll never get out of my clutches. Now come down —"

They heard a step behind them; and turned to greet Captain Maynard.

"Cap — father, I mean — confound it! I can't realize this blessed thing yet — come down with Uncle Dick (Great Cæsar! Uncle Dick!) — come down with us, and see the good people. I've sent Tonta to the inn after Ocebee's brother's pipe; and I've got my freedom, and my father and my mother, and my uncle, and old Fleetfoot, and everything and everybody, except — Well, come down, father mine, and uncle mine, and see what makes the laughter in the parlor."

And the three men went arm in arm down the broad stairway, the two great brawny fellows on either side, with the slight white-haired man between them.

At the foot of the stairs they met Mrs. Maynard, her handsome face wreathed in smiles. She drew her son to one side and whispered something in his ear. Then he kissed her.

"As you say, mother dear," he laughed. "But where is his Lordship?"

"In the back-parlor, Motier. Don't keep him waiting." And she went with her husband and her brother into the parlor.

Motier's face wore a little frown as he went down the hall toward the back-parlor door. He had always

been irresistibly drawn toward Lord Durham; but he still remembered him as the one who had wooed Alice, only to set her aside and marry her mother. And Alice had been much in his mind to-night; for, since she was not his sister — But nonsense! That was five years ago.

He opened the door. Lord Durham stood in the middle of the room; and by his side was a slight, fair-haired girl, dressed in black.

"Motier," said the nobleman, "permit me to present my daughter, Alice Noel!"

There was a glad cry and a quick rush of silken skirts.

"Motier!"

"Alice!"

And thus they met.

After Durham had stolen from the room, and when the two pairs of lips had parted, they looked into each other's eyes, and Alice buried her face against Motier's shoulder.

"Those were long, long years; weren't they, Motier?" she said, with a tremor in her voice.

"Yes, dearest; so long that they seemed to have no end."

"And you did not understand about—about father? and you even thought me your sister? and still you loved me?"

He held her closer to him. "Yes, sweetheart. I have loved you since the day that you pinned the first white rose on my coat; and I'll cease to love you when roses cease to grow."

She looked up with love's bright light in her eyes.

"You have made me so happy," she said, "for I feared you had forgotten."

"Forgotten?" he repeated, with gentle reproach. "Did I not tell you, back there in the distant ages, that a man never forgets, even when he tries?"

"Then you have tried to forget?"

"Am I not here now?" he asked, evading her question.

"Yes." Her voice sank into a whisper.

"And you love me?"

Her lips quivered. "Now and forever," she said, very softly.

"Then let the past be as it may. Look again into my eyes, sweetheart, and tell me — "

"Yes, my knight — I love you."

He took her face between his hands, as he had that morning years before, in the rose-garden at Beechwood.

They walked across to the open window and looked over toward the river. The moon was climbing up from the level of the tree tops, and a broad beam of shimmering silver spread across the Neuse.

"More than once did I fear never to see our river again," said Motier. "And the thought was not a pleasant one; for I have seen life at its best beside that stream — and with you."

"Were the days by the river happier than the two white rose days?" she asked, returning the pressure of his hand.

"Nay, lady mine; there were no days like those two."

"Yea, verily — for me as well as for you. But why

did you think the river would be yours no more? Was there much danger through those last long years?"

"A little; by land and by sea. And some of bitterness, also."

"Did she come much into your life?"

"Lucille? Yes; but not as before. She and her father sailed with me to Liverpool. There I left them."

"Have you never seen her since?"

"Not as Lucille. Once I saw her, but she bore another name."

"Has she married?"

"No; save in the spirit. I saw her in the chapel of the convent of Saint Sylvestro, when the cardinal gave his benediction and the black-robed sisterhood chanted her welcome. Now she is Sister Berenice; and she wears the coarse garb of a Franciscan and looks at the world through a grated window."

Alice shuddered. "It seems so terrible, doesn't it? for she was so beautiful and so queenly."

"Yes."

"And do you think that before she took the veil she — she was better?"

"That lies between herself and her God, dear one. I do not know."

They were silent a long time. A dark ship with sails outspread crept up the river and dropped anchor in the middle of the silver path of the moonlight. From a tree by the window a whippoorwill gave its mournful call; and its mate in the cypress groves by the river-shore echoed a soft response.

From the parlor came the subdued music of the

harpsichord, with an under-melody of laughter and conversation.

While they stood there, with the moonlight streaming in upon them, Alice's eyes sought her lover's face. "You are happy to be again with me?" she asked, with a soft, wistful ring in her voice.

He bent down and kissed her. "Happy? Aye, happier than it is right that man should be. The dark days have gone by. Even their memory is lost in my love for you."

"In your love only? Then does mine count for naught?"

"It counts for so much that we shall call it the love that spanned the gulf of sorrowful years. From the first white rose day to this night within my father's house, all is forgotten, sweetheart, save only your love and mine."

His hand and hers, his heart and hers, were joined forever! Looking to the years yet to come, they knew that love had wrought its crown of gold — of gold without dross — from the midst of a fiery furnace. And before their eyes and upon their hearts was the sign of the pure white rose.

Through paths that were dark and winding, through days and nights that seemed as years upon years, and through years that seemed to have no end, Love, though blind, had found its way. The stony highways had been cleared and smoothed and straightened by the touch of the Hand of hands.

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